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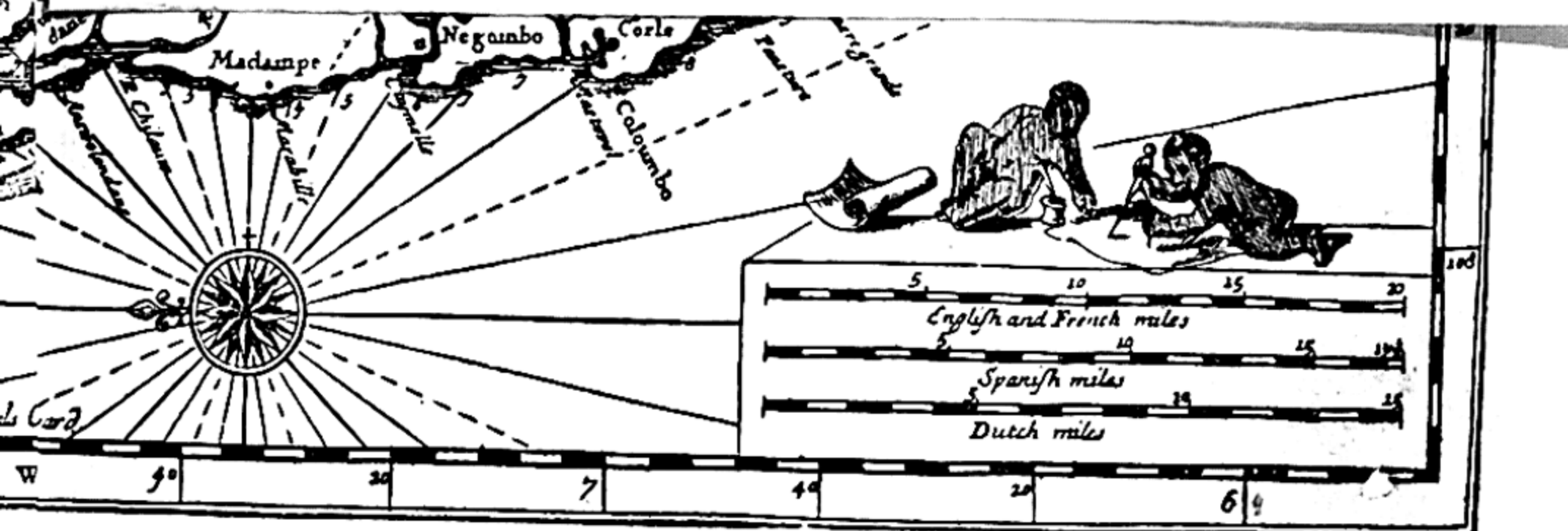
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ROBERT KNOX
in the Kandyan Kingdom

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'THERE IS ANOTHER GREAT GOD, WHOM THEY CALL BUDDHA'

[see p. 132

ROBERT KNOX

in the Kandyan Kingdom

Selected and edited by
E. F. C. LUDOWYK
Professor of English, University of Ceylon

With four photographs by the late
LIONEL WENDT



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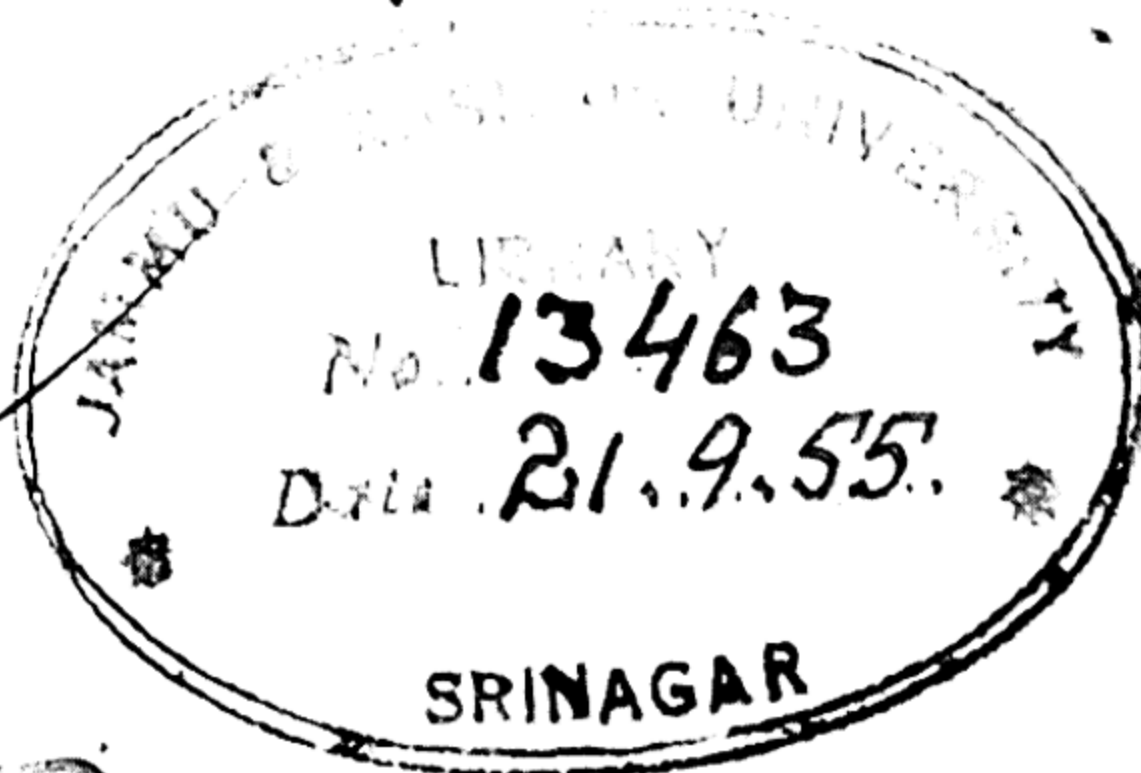


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PREFACE

THIS abridgement of Robert Knox's *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* and of some parts of his *Autobiography* is intended to provide the general reader with access to what is both one of the best source-books on the Kandyan Kingdom as well as an excellent example of a seventeenth-century travel-book. Knox's spelling has been modernized and his seventeenth-century capitals reduced according to present-day usage, but, in order to preserve as much of its original character as possible in an abridgement of this kind, his idiom and his anglicization of Sinhalese words (except for place names) have been retained.

It would have been impossible for me to have completed this abridgement without the constant help and advice of Mr C. W. Nicholas, to whose unrivalled knowledge of the 'Ceylon countryside I owe a great deal. The staff of the Indian Branch of the Oxford University Press has helped me very considerably with advice and criticism. I acknowledge their help and interest with gratitude, as well as that of Bhikkhu W. Rahula. Acknowledgements are also due to Jackson, Son and Company (Booksellers) Ltd., of Glasgow, for permission to use extracts from *An Historical Relation* and Knox's *Autobiography* edited by James Ryan; and to Mr Harold Peiris for permission to reproduce here four of the late Lionel Wendt's photographs.

E.F.C.L.

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INTRODUCTION

KNOX's *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* delighted and edified his age. The first edition was sold out, and he had the satisfaction of writing 'my booke of Ceylone hath found such acceptance of this present generation that all the bookes that were printed are bought up & many more would have been bought if were to be had, & also that it hath bin translated into Dutch & french' gives me cause to thinke that hereafter some may inquire or wish to know what became of the Author after his escape from Ceylone & how that hand of Divine Providence that was so signally extended over him thare did afterwards provide for & preserve him to his lives end'. Whether they were interested in it as a description of an as yet unknown land, or an exciting narrative, or the record of the goodness of the heavenly dispensation, or an incentive to shrewder spirits to seek their profits in Eastern trade, it was read and enjoyed by English readers for over two centuries. A copy of the first edition before me now provides interesting testimony;² it bears the stamp of the Edinburgh Circulating Library, and in addition to underlining, in an ink now faded to an indefinable rust, of selected passages, there occurs on the last page, just above the printer's FINIS,

¹ The *D.N.B.* article on Knox mentions a German version in 1747.

² I owe this to the kindness of Dr A. Nell whose copy was 'discovered' by him in a bookman's barrow in Charing Cross Road. This copy bears all the traces of having been diligently conned, yet its readers were kinder to it than present-day borrowers of the Colombo Public Library, it seems.

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this comment in a shaky old-fashioned hand—
'A very excellent narrative'.

I should like to suggest that the excellence of the book, whether it is looked upon as the record of a sensitive and dependable observer or the recounting of unusual adventures, is due to the complete ordinariness of the man who was born to see strange sights, and to experience in captivity the clemency of Divine Providence. Robert Knox was an ordinary man; in his own words his life after his return to England was not interesting on its own account, but as further proof of the signal extent to which he was providentially cared for. His ordinariness was not an unfortunate deficiency, it was a practical virtue he possessed in common with numerous Englishmen of his class and upbringing. It was the ordinariness of Bunyan before and of Defoe after him. As it is expressed in his work it is a quality which enabled a man to accept the sum of things as given and yet to struggle so as to alter it a little in his favour. Knox was a middle-class man, a Londoner. His father was a fairly prosperous Commander in the East India Company's service who could afford to send his son to a good private school and fit out a ship for a voyage to the East Indies. The son at the age of fourteen took to his father's calling and on his retirement was a Captain as his father had been. His career was very much like that of the many Englishmen of his class and time who made a living hazardously out of their skill in handling ships and doing business. Even its adventures—sea-fights, mutiny, hair-breadth escapes, piracy—were not different from those Defoe was writing about in the next generation.

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Knox's life had its highlights and shadows. He never forgot that he had been a captive in Ceylon during his best years, yet this is never so much in his thoughts that one can say that his whole life was coloured by it. There are references in his *Autobiography* to the island and his life there, but nothing in the manner of the reference serves to show that Ceylon was anything more than one set of events in a series accepted and written off as the usual accompaniments of voyaging in the East to make a living. Bunyan and Defoe in their own way lived through experiences; the adventures of one were spiritual, the other recreated his in the lives of the figures of his imagination: the records of both are marked by lack of ostentation and an unassuming forthrightness. Knox's excellence is something similar. It is not necessary to assert it in the form of a paradox that the quality of his book comes from the commonplaceness of the man; it is rather to be thought of as providing the impression of an attitude to life quiet, modest and resourceful. Professor Notestein in his review of three centuries of English people¹ writes of his seventeenth-century characters, 'fairly unimportant people' as he calls them, that though they 'were not lacking in character in outline, yet even their personalities were simpler than those of our time . . . Their philosophy was standardized and of a piece; the individual had not yet—or rarely—made his own attempt at truth and unity. Their faith was more readily useful than ours, their passions more immediate and more easily shifted, like those of the young, their modes more black and white, their

¹ Wallace Notestein: *English Folk*, 1938.

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aspirations more in a straight line, their pleasures less sophisticated and often childlike.' Robert Knox was like these people of whom Notestein writes. Like them he was 'unimportant'.

Because Knox was, in this sense, the ordinary product of a traditional culture in many ways like the Sinhalese, for all its prodigious differences from it, he was able to live so fully and completely in the Kandyan Kingdom for close upon twenty years. He was very different from the Kandyan landholder. He was first of all a foreigner, and then as a prisoner and an internee at the King's charge he was again different from his neighbours and fellows. But throughout his life in Ceylon he moved with the ordinary villagers of the various parts into which his several enforced changes of residence took him. He sought no preferment through the patronage of the great; like Strafford, he learnt after the disappointment of his hopes of help through Ova Matteral to 'put not his trust in princes'. If ever he used the good offices of his superiors it was to settle himself more securely as an ordinary prosperous Kandyan freeholder. Long before he escaped and became a seven-days' wonder in Colombo with his long hair, beard 'a span broad' and Sinhalese 'habit', he had become almost indistinguishable from the Sinhalese. He was a familiar figure in the countryside. He had even learnt to take delight in chewing betel, and his 'long practice in eating it brought (him) to the . . . condition' that like the inhabitants of those parts he 'had rather want victuals and clothes than be without it'. Yet he returned to his native land and had perforce to forgo this brave and

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wholesome practice. And in England unlike the celebrated traveller of the next century, Lemuel Gulliver, he could abide the smell of his fellow beings. He lived to a great age, and left, as his editor James Ryan put it, 'considerable substance' in his will. He could live and prosper in two different worlds, he could transplant himself from one to the other, because as far as he was concerned these two seemingly different worlds were the same.

They were the same and yet they were very different. What he set down so familiarly was a true and faithful record because he could understand so much of what he had observed. Yet that things had to be observed, that there was much to set down, was due to differences which sometimes he failed to understand. He judged, compared, and rationalized with reference to a standard of values which was willing to understand and excuse. There are surprisingly few moral judgements in the book; what Knox disliked or abhorred he could attribute to the misfortune of the Kandyans—they were heathen. But apart from this he was sympathetic to their failings, he was ready to see that in similar circumstances he would himself have done as they did. He is properly grieved at the 'insolence of the heathen' in offering him a halter to drag his father's body to the jungle, but for their proneness to lying and their disinclination to work he has sensible explanations. The book is not free from grave misinterpretations and wrong emphases—he imagined that Buddhism was the religion of a personal god like Christianity, and he transfers to it accordingly the framework of Christian legend and belief. But it is noteworthy that, puritanical as

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his upbringing in England had been,¹ he does not take up for hostile comment such subjects as priesthood and priestcraft which were fair game for Puritans. He did not understand feudal service tenure which was a thing of the past in England; to him it was a vexatious obstacle in the way of trade and development. And he is, as we shall see, such a believer in the rule of common law that Raja Sinha's government was to him little better than a monstrous tyranny. But yet when he was questioned at Batavia about his experiences in Ceylon he confessed that 'he thought much of him (Raja Sinha II)'. He thought his government very cruel, but said further in the words of the Dag Register entry: 'But whether the Sinhalese rule was always such he has not heard.'²

Misunderstandings and misinterpretations do not destroy the value of his book. Knox has so much to tell, and above all he has nothing to hide, no ulterior motive to serve. He may have written to satisfy impulses of which he was not consciously aware, there may be exposed in his book a self-conceit resembling that he attributed to the *Chingulays*, but this never obtrudes. Knox himself claimed among other things that he wrote the book to give himself practice in writing on the long voyage home. We could accept that, and not trouble unduly about his prejudices which are plain and for all to see. They are not offensive because much more strongly stated than either prejudice or mistake is his sober appreciation of a culture which,

¹ See the *D.N.B.* article.

² *J.R.A.S.(C.B.)*, XXVI, No. 71, pp. 184-92.

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to have valued it as he did, was in itself proof of a lack of prejudice.

The book is more than the faithful record of an unusually sensitive observer. One of his friends praised it in quaint seventeenth-century verse because it conveyed the jewels of the far-famed island of Ceylon. The historian and sociologist would agree with that estimate though they would put it in soberer terms. But there is more to *An Historical Relation* than a scientific tract in Royal Society style. It has to be praised for three cardinal virtues; first of all as a fascinating narrative in an easy and natural colloquial language, then as the expression of a character which never attempts to put itself across but is always to be felt, and last of all as of some significance in the development of English prose fiction. Of all its claims to eminence Knox could scarcely have suspected the last.

Testimony has already been provided of how several generations of readers in England reacted to Knox's story. Naturally it is not to be expected that with changes in taste this should still be the opinion of readers there or here. To those accustomed to a different style, another tempo, its subject-matter and its manner might seem prosy or dull. Novels, travel-books, journals—any category into which Knox's work might be put—have developed qualities out of his reach. These are the special products of a popular culture far different from his. Yet for the reader in Ceylon in particular, the narrative, whatever opinions are expressed on it, is almost of symbolic interest. Knox was not the first Englishman in Ceylon of whom there is record; there was Ralph Fitch who arrived in Ceylon on

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6 March 1589 and found it a ' brave Island, very fruitful and fair '. Knox was the first Englishman of whose life on the island we have any record. If not on its own account, then for purposes of comparison and understanding of a process which did not begin with him though he is symptomatic of it, his work must remain interesting and valuable to readers here.

I leave it to its readers to decide whether the story is well told. Perhaps the flavour of a time long past might contribute an effect which Knox surely never intended. In this abridgement it will be noticed that the story has been put first: in Knox's *An Historical Relation*, the story, which must have been the least important part of the book as far as the writer was concerned, is relegated to Part IV. If any evidence were wanted of its popularity in its own time, then we shall have to go to Defoe who takes advantage of a turn in the adventures of Captain Singleton to summarize the whole account of Knox's captivity and escape for the benefit of his readers. Defoe puts it in not as a convenient make-weight, but as a piece of useful and interesting information. He values it ' for the rarity as well as the truth of it ', and he was at pains to make a careful summary of Part IV. It has to be repeated that this part of the book was of least value to Knox himself. The title with the word ' historical ' indicates that it was as a factual ' scientific ' record of a little-known land and of a strange people that the author asked the book to be judged. The manuscript was left with Robert Hooke of the Royal Society who wrote a preface to the book when it was first published in 1681.

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It is not likely that Hooke altered or recast the manuscript, because in the Preface he refers to the book as a first taste of Knox's observations which might have been much enlarged had Knox had time and occasion. Hooke's interest and Knox's were in the contribution made by the book to the improvement of 'Natural Knowledge'.

Whether the narrative pleases or not, it is unlikely that Knox's prose will fail to delight and instruct. Of Knox it might be said, as of men much greater than he, that he wrote as he thought, for his is a natural prose style. The words he uses do not dress the thought, they are the thought and the feeling. If one can call it a prose style, then it is the prose style of Bunyan, of Defoe and of innumerable pamphleteers who wrote because they had something urgent to convey. The strong biblical flavour of Bunyan's style is rightly missing here, but over and over again it is clear that the turn of a phrase, the formulation of an attitude is the residue of a careful study of the Bible and Protestant devotional literature. Knox had *The Practice of Piety* with him when he was taken captive, and during the early days of his captivity he was able to buy an English Bible. Even if he had been without those two books it would not have been possible for him to have written anything at all without remembering the language of the Bible. A great deal of the Englishman's education at that time was derived from the Bible; if it did nothing else it at least accustomed the ear to a phraseology that was dignified and moving. The hints of biblical English in Knox are not an affectation. Where it is most likely that Knox would have used the English of the

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Bible, in his account of the religion of the people, his language is grave and has a natural elevation:

There is another great God, whom they call Buddha, unto whom the salvation of souls belongs. Him they believe once to have come upon the earth. And when he was here, that he did usually sit under a large and shady tree, called *bogaha*. Which trees ever since are accounted holy, and under which with great solemnities they do to this day celebrate the ceremonies of his worship. He departed from the earth from the top of the highest mountain on the island, called Adam's Peak: where there is an impression like a foot, which, they say, is his, as has been mentioned before.

To the language he writes Knox gives something of his own, there is something in the dignity of his tone, the attitude he takes up towards his reader, which insinuates itself upon one. There is a particular cadence in his sentences which was remarkably brought out in the spoken commentary to the film *The Song of Ceylon*. The quiet and cold tones of the late Lionel Wendt's voice seemed absolutely in character. The effect of passages such as the one below, accompanying a visual record like that imprinted on Knox's memory, was indescribably lovely :

On the south side of Kandy is a hill, supposed to be the highest on this island, called in the Sinhalese language, Samanala Kanda; but by the Portuguese and the European nations, Adam's Peak. It is sharp like a sugar-loaf, and on the top a flat stone with the print of a foot like a man's on it, but far bigger, being about two feet long. The people of this land count it meritorious to go and worship this impression; and generally about their New Year, which is in March, they, men, women and children, go up this vast and high mountain to worship.

The hall-mark of Knox's style is something he

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shares with the ordinary pamphleteer of his time. It is the reflection of the plainness and simplicity of what has to be communicated. Defoe must have learnt a great deal from a style like this. But he was a man of parts, with a very judicious notion of how to achieve his ends in writing. So there is in his work a concern for plainness and simplicity which are a little different from these qualities in themselves. It is the quality of his style that one cannot see or feel the care that has gone into the deft detail that secures verisimilitude. There is nothing in Knox like the best in Defoe. The gradual inevitability with which Defoe builds up his character and atmosphere in *Robinson Crusoe* is a calculated effect, for all its effortlessness, which was never Knox's intention to produce. Yet there are some things in Knox which can stand comparison with Defoe. His style, objective and dry as it is for the greater part of the work, has its passages of colour and tension. There is the record of that moment during their escape when Knox and Rutland betrayed by the windings of the Malvatta Oya almost blunder into the villages by the Tissa Veya :

We heard the noise of people on every side, and expected every moment to see some of them to our great terror. And it is not easy to say in what danger, and in what apprehension of it we were; it was not safe for us to stir backwards or forwards for fear of running among people, and it was as unsafe to stand still where we were, lest somebody might spy us: and where to find covert we could not tell. Looking about us in these straits we spied a great tree by us, which for the bigness thereof 'tis probable might be hollow. To which we went, and found it so. It was like a tub, some three foot high. Into it immediately we both crept, and made a shift to sit there for several hours, though

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very uneasily, and all in mud and wet. But, however, it did greatly comfort us in the fright and amazement we were in.

So soon as it began to grow dark, we came creeping out of our hollow tree, and put for it as fast as our legs could carry us. And then we crossed that great road, which all the day before we did expect to come up with, keeping close by the riverside, and going so long till dark night stopped us. We kept going the longer, because we heard the voice of men halloing towards evening: which created us a fresh disturbance, thinking them to be people that were coming to chase us. But at length we heard elephants behind us, between us and the voice, which we knew by the noise of cracking the boughs and small trees, which they break down and eat. These elephants were a very good guard behind us, and were methought like the darkness that came between Israel and the Egyptians. For the people we knew would not dare to go forwards hearing elephants before them.

A passage like that shows how well Knox writes because he writes naturally. The apprehension in which they were is recreated, he slips unconsciously into the present tense, while the simplicity of his phrasing projects a sharp impression of the shouts heard from afar, the great road, the darkness, and the dangers which now paradoxically afford some relief. Knox's English has the rare quality of adequacy, it makes no fuss, it has the virtue of communicating exactly the sum of the writer's meaning, his attitude and his intention. If it is profitable to traffic in maxims for good writing, then one could scarcely do better than recommend Knox's satisfying mode of expressing himself.

The style is expressive in an unexpected sense, and its expressiveness is not the result of the writer's precalculated move to exhibit the character in terms of the range of expression and thought of the

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character itself. The style is not an artfully induced mode, like that of Hemingway for instance. To some extent Defoe's is an expressive style, in the sense that the writer's labour is directed towards producing, through the language attributed to the character, as complete an expression of the kind of character exhibited. Defoe's language is just the sort of language which a seaman of that time (once the proprieties were observed) might have used. Knox is of course not writing fiction, and it is useless to speculate on how he would have written had he turned novelist. But there is a natural solidity in his style of writing which Defoe obtains by a great triumph of art. The way Knox writes is the way he must have spoken. We are left thereby with the definite impression of a character, not a personality perhaps in the modern sense of that term, but of somebody who comes to life in the pages of the book.

The person of whom the book makes us aware may not be an attractive type, we might criticize his narrowness of view, his values may not appeal to us, but there is an assurance, a solidity about the man that is impressive. James Ryan suggests that William Walters the Quaker surgeon or doctor in *Captain Singleton* smacks somewhat strongly of Knox himself. But there is a great difference between the two. Defoe concentrates in his character such a readiness to serve God and Mammon both that the Quaker is too quick with sentiments which Knox would scarcely have expressed, though he might have found himself in agreement with them. 'I would as soon trust a man whose interest binds him to be just to me, as a man whose principle

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binds himself', says William. Robert Knox could not have been so canny or have expressed himself so cannily. All his activities were directed to the great end of getting on, of overcoming a hostile environment and making his way in the world. In this he succeeded admirably, so excellently that he could look back on no less than five occasions when he was stripped naked with all he had in the world taken away. Five times he returned to the struggle with circumstances, and in the end he made good. The first of his reversals was his captivity, twice during his captivity he lost all that he had accumulated by his knitting and his lending of corn on interest. When he made his escape he left his little estate at Eladetta and all he was possessed of. On his return to England he took up again his old calling of the sea, and on his second voyage his men made off with the ship and left him 'poorer and more destitute than when I came out of my Ceylon captivity'. The courage and persistence with which he addressed himself to the duty of getting on surely has a special significance attached to it if we consider Knox as a typical seventeenth-century man. As Willey puts it, the typical figure of the age which succeeded the middle years of the seventeenth century when *The Pilgrim's Progress* was written, was Robinson Crusoe. Whereas Bunyan's figure is the man who set out in search of spiritual salvation, Defoe offers us the symbolical figure Robinson Crusoe, the isolated economic man, pitting his lonely strength successfully against his environment in a remote part of the earth, and carrying on a little missionary activity as a side-line. Now Robinson Crusoe, as we hope to show, was cast in the mould

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of Robert Knox. A great deal of what Defoe must have read in Knox goes into Crusoe, and the story of Alexander Selkirk added something again to the amalgam of which Crusoe was compounded. What Defoe is most likely to have derived from his study of Knox was a sound appreciation of a man who by contemporary London standards had made a conspicuous success of living in a strange land. Knox has a respect for property, an interest in figures and quantities, a capacity to drive a good bargain and a great resourcefulness. All these must have been admirable traits to a good, if not always successful, businessman like Defoe. Of his manner of life, in spite of the references to it in his *Autobiography*, we really know little. There are no light touches, no personal details to be culled from the account given in *An Historical Relation*. The most intimate detail, if one can call it that, we have of Knox's life in the Kandyan Kingdom occurs in a note in the Sinhalese vocabulary he compiled for the benefit of his friend Hooke. He writes there: 'I had a monkey which I taught to bring me . . . a firebrand and light my pipe upon saying to him *Gbindera penula genning*, i.e. a firebrand bring.' Nothing of that kind appears in *An Historical Relation* which is a history written according to the method of 'historical' writing then in vogue. Were there events in his daily life in the Kandyan Kingdom impossible to relate because they would not accord with the even tenor of a methodical history, things which would have shown Knox's character in a different light? This is extremely doubtful. Knox was at all times the God-fearing man who could quite naturally see God's purpose and his own

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interest closely identified. He had his sure defence in his good conscience. For the rest, as he told the Committee of the East India Company on a later occasion, he desired 'nothing more than (his) right as a free-born subject of England according to law, which I doubted not but would favour my righteous cause'.

It is not possible to see how close he was to the character in fiction who is really his foster-child. To Defoe *Robinson Crusoe* was an allegory of his own life, but if you peer into the features of the allegoric counterpart of Defoe you will see something of the man who was not the lonely inhabitant of a desert island, but who lived in an alien land among strangers, cut away from his own countrymen, supported by the strength of his resolution to resist acceptance of his fate, and striving hard not only to return, but also to employ profitably wherever he might be the single talent that had been given him. There is a great deal in Selkirk's life which Defoe did not use, he could not. If he had, *Robinson Crusoe* would never have been taken to the heart of a reading public who valued the man not for pity of his romantic plight (it was too early for the word 'romantic' then), but for his shining example. Selkirk just managed to survive, *Crusoe* like Knox very soon had his feet set in the path of earthly success. Walter de la Mare, in his fascinating compendium of information about islands, offers the following as the most satisfying picture of Selkirk: 'Thus best we picture him, praying aloud, singing and dancing with his kids and cats in the flames and smoke of his allspice wood, and the whole world's moon taunting and enchanting him

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in her seasons.” How far this is from the go-getter Crusoe who at the end of his stay on his desert island was in a fair way to become a colonial administrator. As de la Mare himself notes, Crusoe ‘wins his way out of an earthly paradise back into this wicked world’ and finds himself the possessor of a prodigious fortune. Selkirk was a moody and unduly quiet man; Steele found that he ‘showed a certain disregard to the ordinary things about him, as if he had been sunk in thought’. How different from Crusoe and from Knox.

Where then is Defoe likely to have found those traits of worldly wisdom, of Christian professions and of determined opposition to all that fate could bring that marked Robinson Crusoe? I suggest that he found these in Knox. Knox’s situation was much like Crusoe’s; the reader of *An Historical Relation* would remember all those passages in the story which call up the author’s loneliness. One trait in Knox’s character was his self-sufficiency—his father died, his ‘black boy’ left him, he buried his dear friend John Loveland, and although he set out to find his way back home again with another, the impression left is of one’s man constant vigilance and dependence upon himself. The Bible he so unbelievably comes by, the theme of God’s favour extended to those who put their talents to use, these distinguish Knox’s narrative. To us, after the lapse of over two hundred years and in a world so parcelled out, ‘settled’ (in all its many senses), Crusoe’s island and Knox’s Kandyan Kingdom might seem aglow with a romantically beautiful light. But

¹ Walter de la Mare: *Desert Islands*, 1930, p. 29. It is much to be regretted that de la Mare makes no reference to Knox.

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neither to Knox nor to Crusoe was the land in which they found themselves viewed with any feelings but those of sober appraisal of the plight in which they found themselves, many thousand miles from their own country and people. As he sees the Mahaveli Ganga Knox remembers the Thames, but it comes to his mind because this river and that were both of a size. If he remembers the coconut palm it is not nostalgically to recall the most conventional of all symbols of island romance, but to remember the various uses to which fruit, wood and leaves could be put. All around him, and all around Crusoe, there lay 'a horrid wilderness'. To have survived it was remarkable—Selkirk as well as countless others had had this experience—but to have thrived in it was to have given one's experiences a symbolic significance, a significance sufficiently strong to have persuaded at least one reader of the book that here before him was the analogue of his own life.

It is by these devious ways and uncertain paths that the connexion of Knox's story with the subsequent history of English fiction is to be traced. Defoe took away from prose fiction the reproach of idle and meretricious romance. If his memory of Captain Knox's true history was not the cause, it must have helped to confirm a tendency already noticeable in Defoe, that of using truth to improve upon fiction. It is no more than a pleasing thought perhaps, but it recommends itself to the senses as one reads Knox's account of his life in the Kandyan Kingdom, that the man who tramped its 'narrow wayes' and high mountains was one of the forbears of Robinson Crusoe.

[illegible]

This book was written by me Robert Knox (the son of Robert Knox who died on the island of Ceylon) when I was about 39 years of age. I was taken prisoner on Ceylon, 4th April, 1660. I was born on Tower Hill in London, 8th February, 1641. My age when taken was 19 years 1 month and 27 days. Continued prisoner there 19 years 6 months 14 days, so that I was a prisoner there 4 months and 17 days longer than I had lived in the world before, and on the 18th October, 1679, God set me free from that captivity, being then with the Hollanders at Arippu fort, to whom be all glory and praise.

ROBERT KNOX, 1696, in London

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE CAPTURE

IN the time of my childhood I was chiefly brought up under the education of my mother, my father generally being at sea, a commander of a ship that traded in the Mediterranean seas. She was a woman of extraordinary piety: God was in all her thoughts, as appeared by her frequent discourses and godly exhortations to us her children to teach us the knowledge of God, and to love, fear and serve Him in our youths. It was always her practice while she with my sister were knitting or sewing, to set me to read by them in the Bible, or some other godly book, always earnestly exhorting us to the fear of God and not at any time to omit private morning and evening prayers, for which use she gave me *The Practice of Piety*, (which) was in my pocket when taken (prisoner) there.

When I was grown big enough I was sent to a boarding-school at Roehampton, to Dr James Fleetwood (my father then dwelling at Wimbledon, in Surrey) who since was Bishop of Worcester. An unhappy accident happened by my hand, when I was about nine years of age. On Christmas Eve one of my father's servants had been shooting small birds in the field, and came home and set up his gun against the house wall, charged but not primed, for all his powder was spent, which was the cause he

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came home for more: whilst he was gone in to fill his horn with powder, I took up the gun and presented it at the tame pigeons that sat on a low back-house. I understood to cock the gun: my brother standing by me on the ground, in the interim the maid came to fetch in my brother, and took him up in her arms, he being then about two or three years old and the gun long and heavy that I could not well hold it up, it went off and hit my brother right in his left eye. He was not then above six yards from the muzzle of the gun, all the shot except very few fell directly into his eye, at which the same servant was sent immediately to London to advise my father of what had happened who that day came home with a surgeon who by God's blessing cured my brother with only the loss of the eye, that he lived to see me after my captivity.

When I was about fourteen years of age my father had built him a new ship and my inclination was strongly bent for the seas, but my father much averse to make me a seaman it happened some sea captains coming to see him, among other discourse, I standing by, asked my father if I was not to go with him to sea. No, says my father, I intend my son shall be a tradesman; they put the question to me, I answered to go to sea was my whole desire, at which they soon turned my father saying this new ship, when you have done going to sea will be as good as a plentiful estate to your son, and it is pity to cross his good inclination since commonly young men do best in that calling they have most mind to be in, and on 7 December 1655 I went from the Downs bound for the East Indies, first to Fort St George, and thence to Bengal,

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and returned home full laden to London in July anno 1657.

At this time the old East India Company were sunk and next to nothing¹ that we were a free ship. Without delay my father fitted his ship for a second East India voyage but before we could get out to sea Cromwell had set up this Company, and forbad all others: the ship was then ready fitted for the East Indies, therefore fain to let her serve the Company, and we sailed out of the Downs the 21st January 1657. This was that fatal voyage in which I lost my father and myself, and the prime of my time for business and preferment for twenty-three years till anno 1680, till God in his mercy visited me.

ANNO MDCLVII. The *Anne* frigate of London, Capt. Robert Knox, Commander, on the one-and-twentieth day of January, set sail out of the Downs, in the service of the honourable the English East India Company, bound for Fort St George, on the coast of Coromandel, to trade one year from port to port in India. Which we having performed, as we were lading of goods to return for England, being in the road² of Masulipatam, on the nineteenth of November anno MDCLIX happened such a mighty storm, that in it several ships were cast away, and we forced to cut our mainmast by the board, which so disabled the ship, that she could not proceed in her voyage. Whereupon Koddigar, in the island of Ceylon, being a very commodious bay, fit for our present

¹ 'The rivalry of the Courteen Association followed by the troubles of the Civil Wars in England, had almost destroyed the East India Company and put an end to the English connexion with India.' G. M. Trevelyan: *English Social History*, 1944, p. 220.

² anchorage.

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distress, Thomas Chambers, Esq. (since Sir Thomas) the Agent at Fort St George, ordered, that the ship should take in some cloth, and go to Koddigar Bay, there to trade, while she lay to set her mast. Where being arrived according to the appointment of those Indian merchants of Porto Novo we carried with us, to whom those goods belonged, they were put ashore, and we minded our business to set another mainmast, and repair other damages we had sustained by the late storm.

At our first coming thither, we were shy and jealous¹ of the people of the place, by reason our nation never had any commerce or dealing with them. But now having been there some twenty days, and going ashore and coming on board at our pleasure without any molestation, the Governor of the place also telling us that we were welcome, as we seemed to ourselves to be, we began to lay aside all suspicious thoughts of the people dwelling thereabouts, who had very kindly entertained us for our money with such provisions and refreshings as those parts afforded.

By this time the King of the country had notice of our being there, and as I suppose grew suspicious of us, not having all that while by any message made him acquainted with our intent and purpose in coming. Thereupon he dispatched down a *Dissauva* or general with his army to us. Who immediately sent a messenger on board to acquaint the captain with his coming, and desired him to come ashore to him, pretending a letter to him from the King. We saluted the message with firing of guns, and my father the captain ordered me with

¹ mistrustful.

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Mr John Loveland, merchant of the ship, to go on shore and wait upon him. When we were come before him, he demanded who we were, and how long we should stay? We told him, we were English, and not to stay above twenty or thirty days, and desired permission to trade in His Majesty's port. His answer was, the King was glad to hear that the English were come to his country, and had commanded him to assist us as we should desire, and had sent a letter to be delivered to none, but to the captain himself.

We were then some twelve miles from the seaside. Our reply was, that the captain could not leave his ship to come so far, but if he pleased to come down to the seaside himself, the captain would immediately wait upon him to receive the letter. Upon which the *Dissauva* desired us to stay that day, and on the morrow he would go down with us.

Which being a small request, and we unwilling to displease him, consented to.

The same day at evening, the *Dissauva* sent two of his chief captains to the house where we lay to tell us, that he was sending a present to the captain, and if we pleased we might send a letter to him; that he would send the present in the night, and himself with us follow the next morning. At which we began to suspect, and accordingly concluded to write and advise the captain not to adventure himself, nor any other on shore till he saw us. We having written a letter to this purpose they took it and went away, but never delivered it.

The next morning the present, which was cattle, fruit, etc., was brought to the seaside, and delivered to the captain; the messengers telling him withal,

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that we were upon the way coming down, with the *Dissauva*; who desired his company on shore against his coming, having a letter from the King to deliver into his own hand. Hereupon the captain mistrusting nothing, came up with his boat into a small river, and being come ashore, sat down under a tamarind tree, waiting for the *Dissauva* and us. In which time the native soldiers privately surrounded him and his men, having no arms with them; and so he was seized on and seven men with him, yet without any violence or plundering them of any thing: and then they brought them up unto us, carrying the captain in a hammock upon their shoulders.

The next day after, the long-boat's crew, not knowing what had happened, came ashore to cut a tree to make cheeks¹ for the mainmast, and were made prisoners after the same manner, though with more violence. For they being rough and making resistance, were bound with withes, and so were led away till they came where the people got ropes. Which when our men saw brought to them, they were not a little affrighted. For being already bound, they concluded there could be no other use for those ropes but to hang them. But the true use of them was to bind them faster, fearing lest the withes might break, and so they were brought up farther into the country; but afterwards being become more tame, they were loosed. They would not adventure to bring them to us, but quartered them in another house, though in the same town. Where without leave we could not see one another. The house wherein they kept

¹ Projections on each side of the mast.

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the captain and us, was all hanged with white calico, which is the greatest honour they can show to any. But the house wherein the other men were, that were brought up after us, was not. They gave us also as good entertainment as the country afforded.

Having thus taken both our boats and eighteen men of us, their next care was, fearing lest the ship should be gone, to secure her: therefore to bring this about, the *Dissauva* told the captain that the reason of this their detainment was, that the King intended to send letters and a present to the English nation by him, and therefore that the ship must not go away, till the King was ready to send his messenger and message, and thereupon desired the captain to send on board to order her stay; and it being not safe for her to ride in the bay, lest the Dutch might come and fire her, that he should give order for her bringing up into the river. Which advice of his, the captain approved not of. But concealing his dislike of it, replied, that unless he could send two of his own men on board with his letter and order, those in the ship would not obey him, but speedily would be gone with the ship. Which he, rather than he would run the hazard of the ship's departing, granted; imagining that the captain would order the ship to be brought up into the river as he had advised, though the captain intended to make another use of this message.

Upon which the captain sent two of his men, some Indians accompanying them in a canoe to the ship, the captain ordering them when they were aboard not to abuse the Indians, but to entertain them very kindly, and afterwards that setting them

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ashore, they should keep the canoe to themselves, instead of our two boats, which they had got from us, and to secure the ship, and wait till further order.

These two men stayed on board, and came not back again. This together with the ship's not coming up displeased the *Dissauva*, and he demanded of the captain the reason thereof. His answer was, that being detained on shore, the men on board would not obey his command. Upon this some days after the *Dissauva* bid the captain send his son with order to those aboard that the ship might be brought into the river, but provided that he would be security for my return; which he promised he would. His order to me was, to see the top chains put upon the cables, and the guns shotted, and to tell Mr John Burford, chief mate, and all the rest, as they valued their lives and liberties to keep a watch, and not to suffer any boat to come near, after it was dark: and charged me upon his blessing, and as I should answer it at the great day, not to leave him in this condition, but to return to him again. Upon which I solemnly vowed according to my duty to be his obedient son.

So having seen all done according to his appointment, I wrote a letter in the name of the Company to clear my father and myself, to this effect; that they would not obey the captain, nor any other in this matter, but were resolved to stand upon their own defence. To which they all set their hands. Which done according to my promise and duty I returned again, and delivered the letter to the *Dissauva*, who was thereby answered, and afterwards urged the captain no more in that

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matter: but gave him leave at his pleasure to write for what he pleased to have brought to him from the ship: still pretending the King's order to release us, was not yet, but would suddenly come. And so we remained expecting it about two months, being entertained as formerly with the best diet and accommodation of the country.

Having continued thus long in suspense, and the time and season of the year spending¹ for the ship to proceed on her voyage to some other place, and our condition being, as we feared, and afterwards found to be, the beginning of a sad captivity, the captain sent order to Mr John Burford to take the charge of the ship upon him, and to set sail for Porto Novo whence we came, and there to follow the Agent's order.

Thus were sixteen of us left to the mercy of those barbarians, the names of which are as follows. The captain, Mr John Loveland, John Gregory, Charles Beard, Roger Gold, Stephen Rutland, Nicholas Mullins, Francis Crutch, John Berry, Ralph Knight, Peter Winn, William Hubbard, Arthur Emery, Richard Varnham, George Smith, and myself. Though our hearts were very heavy, seeing ourselves betrayed into so sad a condition, to be forced to dwell among those that knew not God nor his laws; yet so great was the mercy of our gracious God, that he gave us favour in the sight of this people. Inso-much that we lived far better than we could have expected, being prisoners or rather captives in the hands of the heathen; from whom we could have looked for nothing but very severe usage.

The ship being gone, the King sent to call the

¹ having passed (obs.).

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Dissauva speedily to him, who upon this order immediately marched away with his army, leaving us where we were. But concerning us was no order at all.

The *Dissauva* with his men being gone, the people of the town were appointed to guard and secure us until further order. But they carried us some six miles higher into the country, and would not yet adventure to bring the long-boat's crew unto us, but kept them by themselves in another town, fearing lest we might make an escape, as certainly we would have attempted it, had they not removed us.

Some sixteen days after our last remove, the King was pleased to send a captain with soldiers to bring us up into the country. Who brought us and the other men taken in the long-boat together: which was an heavy meeting; being then, as we well saw, to be carried captives into the mountains. That night we supped together, and the next morning changed our condition into real captivity. Howbeit they gave us many comfortable promises, which we believed not; as, that the King's intent was not to keep us any longer, than till another ship came to carry us away. Although we had but very little to carry, God knows, yet they appointed men to carry the clothes that belonged to the captain and officers.

We still expected they would plunder us of our clothes, having nothing else to be plundered of: but the Sinhalese captain told us, that the King had given order that none should take the value of a thread from us: which indeed they did not. As they brought us up they were very tender of us, as not to tire us with travelling, bidding us go no faster than we would ourselves. This kindness did

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somewhat comfort us. The way was plain and easy to travel through great woods, so that we walked as in an arbour, but desolate of inhabitants. So that for four or five nights we lay on the ground, with boughs of trees only over our heads. And of victuals twice a day they gave us as much as we could eat, that is, of rice, salt fish, dried flesh: and sometimes they would shoot deer and find honey in the trees, good part of which they always brought unto us. And drink we could not want, there being rivers and puddles full of water as we travelled along.

But when we came out of the woods among inhabitants and were led into their towns, they brought us victuals ready dressed after their fashion, viz. rice boiled in water, and three other sorts of food, whereof one flesh, and the other two herbs or such like things that grow in their country, and all kinds of ripe fruit, which we liked very well and fed heartily upon. Our entertainment all along was at the charge of the country: so we fed like soldiers upon free quarter. Yet I think we gave them good content for all the charge we put them to. Which was to have the satisfaction of seeing us eat, sitting on mats upon the ground in their yards to the public view of all beholders. Who greatly admired¹ us, having never seen, nor scarce heard of, Englishmen before. It was also great entertainment to them to observe our manner of eating with spoons,² which some of us had, and that we could not take the rice up in our hands, and put it to our mouths without spilling, as they do, nor gaped and poured

¹ wondered at.

² Knives were more commonly used than spoons; forks which had been introduced from Italy in the early seventeenth century would not have been usual on board ship.

MY FATHER'S DEATH

the water into our mouths out of pots according to their country's custom. Thus at every town where we came they used both young and old in great companies to stare upon us.

Being thus brought up all together somewhat near to the city of Kandy. Now came an order from the King to separate us, and to place us one in a town. Which then seemed to us to be very hard, but it was for the convenience of getting food, being quartered upon the country at their charge.

The captain, Mr John Loveland, myself and John Gregory were parted from the rest, and brought nearer to the city, to be ready when the King should send for us. All the rest were placed one in a town according to the aforesaid order. Special command also was given from the King, that we all should be well entertained, and according to the country fare we had no cause to complain. We four were thus kept together some two months, faring well all the while..

CHAPTER II

MY FATHER'S DEATH

ON the sixteenth of September, 1660, my father and I were placed in a town called Bandara Kosvatta, the situation was very pleasing and commodious, lying about thirty miles to the northward of the city of Kandy, in the country called the Seven Korales and distant from the rest of our people a full day's journey.

The first year that we were brought into this town, this part of the land was extraordinarily

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sickly by agues and fevers, whereof many people died; insomuch that many times we were forced to remain hungry, there being none well enough either to boil or bring victuals unto us.

We had with us a *Practice of Piety*, and Mr Rogers' seven treatises, called *The Practice of Christianity*. With which companions we did frequently discourse; and in the cool of the evening walk abroad in the fields for a refreshing, tired with being all day in our house or prison.

This course lasted until God was pleased to visit us both with country sickness, ague and fever. The sight of my father's misery was far more grievous unto me than the sense of my own, that I must be a spectator of his affliction, and not any ways able to help him. And the sight of me so far augmented his grief, that he would often say: 'What have I done when I charged you to come ashore to me again, your dutifulness to me has brought you to be a captive. I am old and cannot long hold out, but you may live to see many days of sorrow, if the mercy of God do not prevent it. But my prayers to God for you shall not be wanting, that for this cause he would visit you with his mercy, and bestow on you a blessing.'

Upwards of three months my father lay in this manner upon his bed, having only under him a mat and the carpet he sat upon in the boat when he came ashore, and a small quilt I had to cover him withal. And I had only a mat upon the ground and a pillow to lie on, and nothing to cover me but the clothes on my back: but when I was cold, or that my ague came upon me, I used to make a fire, wood costing nothing but the fetching.

MY FATHER'S DEATH

We had a boy my father brought from Porto Novo to attend upon him, who seeing his master to be a prisoner, would not now obey his command, further than what agreed unto his own humour, neither was it then as we thought in our power to compel or make him: but it was our ignorance. As for me, my ague now came to a settled course; that is, once in three days, and so continued for sixteen months time.

There appearing now to us no probability, whereupon to build any hopes of liberty, the sense of it struck my father into such an agony and strong passion of grief, that once I well remember in nine days time nothing came into his mouth, but cold water; neither did he in three months together ever rise up out of his bed, but when the course of nature required it: always groaning and sighing in a most piteous manner.

In this manner my father lay until the ninth of February 1661. By which time he was consumed to an anatomy, having nothing left but skin to cover his bones; yet he often would say, that the very sound of liberty would so revive him, that it would put strength into his limbs. But it was not the will of Him, to whom we say, Thy will be done, to have it so.

The evening before his death, he called me to come near his bedside, and to sit down by him, at which time also I had a strong fever upon me. This done, he told me, that he sensibly felt his life departing from him; and was assured that this night God would deliver him out of this captivity, and that he never thought in all his lifetime that death could be so easy and welcome to any man,

MY FATHER'S DEATH

as God had made it to be to him, and the joys he now felt in himself he wanted utterance to express to me. He told me, these were the last words, that ever he should speak to me, and bid me well regard and be sure to remember them, and tell them to my brother and sister, if it pleased God, as he hoped it would, to bring us together in England; where I should find all things settled to my content, relating to me after what manner he had settled his estate by letters which he sent from Koddiyar.

In the first place and above all, he charged me to serve God, and with a circumspect care to walk in his ways, and then, he said, God would bless me and prosper me. And next, he bade me have a care of my brother and sister. And lastly, he gave me a special charge to beware of strong drink, and lewd company, which as by experience many had found, would change me into another man, so that I should not be myself. It deeply grieved him, he said, to see me in captivity in the prime of my years, and so much the more because I had chosen rather to suffer captivity with him than to disobey his command. Which now he was heartily sorry for, that he had so commanded me, but bade me not repent of obeying the command of my father; seeing for this very thing, he said, God would bless me, and bid me be assured of it, which he doubted not of, viz. that God Almighty would deliver me; which at that time I could not tell how to conceive, seeing but little sign of any such matter. But blessed be the name of my most gracious God, who has so bountifully sustained me ever since in the land of my captivity, and preserved me alive to see my deceased father's word fulfilled! And truly

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I was so far from repenting, that I had obeyed the command of my father, and performed the oath and promise I made unto him upon it, that it rather rejoiced me to see that God had given me so much grace.

But though it was a trouble to him, that by his means I was thus made a captive; yet it was a great comfort to him, he said, to have his own son sit by him on his death-bed, and by his hands to be buried, whereas otherwise he could expect no other but to be eaten by dogs or wild beasts. Then he gave me order concerning his burial, that having no winding-sheet, I should pull his shirt over his head, and slip his breeches over his feet, and so wrap him up in the mat he lay upon: and then ceased speaking, and fell into slumber. This was about eight or nine o'clock in the evening, and about two or three in the morning he gave up the ghost, February the ninth, 1661, being very sensible unto the very instant of his departure.

According to his own appointment with my own hands I wrapped him up ready for the grave; myself being very sick and weak, and as I thought ready to follow after him. Having none but the black boy with me, I bade him ask the people of the town for help to carry my father to the grave, because I could not understand their language. Who immediately brought forth a great rope they used to tie their cattle withal, therewith to drag him by the neck into the woods, saying, they could afford me no other help, unless I would pay for it. This insolence of the heathen grieved me much to see, neither could I with the boy alone do what was necessary for his burial, though we had been

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

able to carry the corpse, having not wherewithal to dig a grave, and the ground very dry and hard. Yet it was some comfort to me that I had so much ability as to hire one to help; which at first I would not have spared to have done, had I known their meaning.

By this means I thank God, in so decent a manner as our present condition would permit, I laid my father's body in the grave. Most of which I dug with my own hands; the place being in a wood, on the north side of a cornfield, where heretofore we had used often to walk, going up to Andapala: that division, as I have said, being called Bandara Kosvatta, because formerly it had belonged to the revenues or jointure of the Queen, Bandara implying something relating to the King. It lies towards the north-west of the middle of the island in the country of the Seven Korales.

Thus was I left desolate, sick, and in captivity, having no earthly comforter, none but only He who looks down from Heaven to hear the groaning of the prisoners, and to show himself a father of the fatherless, and a present help to them that have no helper.

CHAPTER III

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

I STILL remained where I was before, having none but the black boy, and my ague to bear me company. Never found I more pleasure in reading, meditating and praying than now. For there was nothing else could administer to me any comfort, neither

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

had I any other business to be occupied about. I had read my two books so often over, that I had them almost by heart. For my custom was after dinner to take a book and go into the fields and sit under a tree, reading and meditating until evening; excepting the day when my ague came, for then I could scarce hold up my head. Often have I prayed as Elijah under the juniper tree, that God would take away my life for it was a burden to me.

At length it pleased God my ague began to be a little moderate; and so by degrees it wore away, after it had held me sixteen months.

Somewhat more I think fit to add and leave upon record under my own hand, how I lived and passed the time of my captivity whilst in Ceylon. First as to habit and apparel; after the few clothes I had with me when taken were worn out (money I had very little to buy more) I was put to my shifts how to cover my carcass. My hat outlasted all the rest, then I tore off the flaps of my shirts and learned to make breeches of them, which did very well for a while, and after they were worn out, for the upper clothing wore not out so fast, then I cut off the sleeves of my shirts which were somewhat large that two sleeves would make one scant pair of breeches, which with the body of my shirt without sleeves made me a whole suit, and in this habit, without stockings or shoes I walked up and down with a hat on.

At length my hair grew so long that it reached to the waistband of my breeches and covered my back (which was not as yet seasoned to endure the scorching sun), that then I left off upper garments

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and turned them into breeches, and from the waist upward I was naked, and I used to go to a small running brook, in a private place, and there wash my clothes, which I laid to dry on the grass while I washed my naked body in the brook, which by that time would be dry, fit to put on again. For at last I had no more than what I wore on my body, and among all my careful thoughts for cloth (for the King allowed me none only victuals) I came to a resolution, viz. to fit large pockets in my breeches, and in harvest time, which is twice in the year, to walk through the rice-fields, and strip the ears of corn and fill my pockets, and empty them at home, and so return again to the fields and fill them again after the former manner till I had got a quantity to sell, which I doubt if known would not [have] been allowed me to do; but about the time I was come to my last shift, God's providence better provided for me, as I fell into the way to knit caps,¹ etc., and so desisted from my former design of plundering the cornfields, which supplied all my wants far better, and then I got a cloth and wore the country habit, which served me for a covering at night, and is far more convenient, here where we often are fain to wade through deep waters and mud naked, that we cannot well get on breeches our feet being all muddy, which is no inconvenience when we wear a cloth about our bodies.

It may be thought very hard to go barefoot, which indeed is not so, only a little at the first, for the soles of the feet soon grow hard, as the hands

¹ A. K. Coomaraswamy (*Medieval Sinhalese Art*, 1908) writes: 'I do not know what the knitted caps made by Knox and his fellow prisoners in such quantities were like; probably there are none of these in existence now.'

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do of men that labour, that instead of difficulty I found a great convenience to be barefoot, for here is no possibility to travel in shoes for wet and dirty ways, neither are we ever troubled with corns, and also sooner dressed and only thorns do pierce or hurt our feet which seldom lie in the pathways, and when they do pierce the thick skin, unless they break in the flesh, which is not often, it is almost as soon well again as pulled out; and it is most certain that most part of the inhabitants of the earth (only cold countries excepted) do go barefoot more out of choice than want as I have found by my own experience, after I had escaped and was with the Dutch, who gave me both clothes and shoes both which at first were to me very troublesome and uneasy like as a collar to a dog, or yoke to a hog, till in time they are habituated to wear them.

So I did some days go with shoes and some days without till the fashion and use had brought me to it, so that to me it plainly appears that Almighty God has enabled man to go in a natural dress, as the rest of his creatures; for we see it is more the fashion of countries, than cold or health of body that puts people to the troublesome way of apparelling and dressing their carcasses, for I was never better in health and ease of body than when I went in the Indian dress, barefoot, with a clout¹ wrapped about my body. In this above-mentioned Indian dress I continued all the time of my captivity till my escape to the Dutch at Colombo (where they at their own charge clothed me) only with an addition of a beard about a span long, as customary in that country.

¹ piece of cloth.

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

Provisions falling short with me, though rice, I thank God, I never wanted, and money also growing low; as well to help out a meal as for recreation, sometimes I went with an angle¹ to catch small fish in the brooks, the aforesaid boy being with me. It chanced as I was fishing, an old man passed by, and seeing me, asked of my boy, if I could read in a book. He answered, 'Yes.' 'The reason I ask,' said the old man, 'is because I have one I got when the Portuguese lost Colombo, and if your master please to buy it, I will sell it him.' Which when I heard of, I bade my boy go to his house with him, which was not far off, and bring it to me to see it, making no great account of the matter, supposing it might be some Portuguese book.

The boy having formerly served the English, knew the book, and as soon as he had got it in his hand came running with it, calling out to me, 'It is a Bible.' It startled me to hear him mention the name of a Bible. For I neither had one, nor scarcely could ever think to see one. Upon which I flung down my angle and went to meet him. The first place the book opened in, after I took it in my hand, was the sixteenth chapter of the Acts, and the first place my eye pitched on, was the thirtieth and one-and-thirtieth verses, where the jailor asked St Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" And he answered saying, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thine house."

The sight of this book so rejoiced me, and affrighted me together, that I cannot say which passion was greater, the joy, for that I had got sight of a Bible, or the fear, that I had not enough to

¹ fishing-rod.

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

buy it, having then but one pagoda¹ in the world, which I willingly would have given for it, had it not been for my boy, who dissuaded me from giving so much, alleging my necessity for money many other ways, and undertaking to procure the book for a far meaner price, provided I would seem to slight it in the sight of the old man. This counsel after I considered I approved of, my urgent necessities earnestly craving, and my ability being but very small to relieve the same: and however, I thought, I could give my piece of gold at the last cast, if other means should fail.

I hope the readers will excuse me, that I hold them so long upon this single passage, for it did so affect me then, that I cannot lightly pass it over as often as I think of it, or have occasion to mention it.

The sight indeed of this Bible so overjoyed me, as if an angel had spoken to me from Heaven. To see that my most gracious God had prepared such an extraordinary blessing for me; which I did, and ever shall, look upon as miraculous, to bring unto me a Bible in my own native language, and that in such a remote part of the world, where his name was not so much as known, and where any Englishman was never known to have been before.

Upon the sight of it I left off fishing, God having brought a fish to me that my soul had longed for; and now how to get it and enjoy the same, all the powers of my soul were employed. I gave God hearty thanks that he had brought it so near me, and most earnestly prayed that he would bestow it on me. Now, it being well towards evening, and

¹ an Indian coin.

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

not having wherewithal to buy it about me, I departed home, telling the old man that in the morning I would send my boy to buy it of him.

All that night I could take no rest for thinking on it, fearing lest I might be disappointed of it. In the morning as soon as it was day, I sent the boy with a knitted cap he had made for me to buy the book, praying in my heart for good success, which it pleased God to grant: for that cap purchased it, and the boy brought it to me to my great joy, which did not a little comfort me over all my afflictions.

It was a full year after my father died, before I had sight of any of my countrymen and fellow prisoners. Then John Gregory with much ado obtained leave to come and see me: which did exceedingly rejoice me. For a great satisfaction it was, both to see a countryman, and also to hear of the welfare of the rest. But he could not be permitted to stay with me above one day. Until then, I knew not punctually¹ where the rest of my countrymen were, but having heard that they were within a day's journey of me, I never ceased importuning the people of the town where I dwelt, to let me go and see them. Which though very loth, yet at last they granted. Being arrived at the nearest Englishman's house, I was joyfully received, and the next day he went and called some of the rest of our countrymen that were near. So that there were some seven or eight of us met together.

Having stayed here some two or three days, we did take leave of one another, hoping to see one

¹ accurately (obs.).

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

another oftener, since now we knew each others' habitations: and I departed to my house.

After I had lived some years in this country (this was Bandara Kosvatta where my father died) and begun to understand and speak a little of the language and my ague to leave me and living in a dirty house joining to a farmer's which I grew weary of and a curious pleasant garden of coconuts belonging to the King lying near in the same town, where I had a great desire to dwell, I moved it to the officers of the town with whom at last I prevailed and they assisted me a little to build a house, but soon left off.

After it was begun I spared no pains to finish it and did at last but before it was finished it had like to have been destroyed by a wild elephant who fell foul of a hog house I had built near it of the *kettule*¹ wood which they love to eat (for this garden was on the outside a little remote from the town). It was in the night and so soon as I heard of it by the noise the elephant made in breaking it, my boy and I each with a lighted torch in our hands ran thither and scared him away before he had done much damage (for generally they run from fire else the towns and cornfields would be destroyed) to prevent which afterwards we lodged in it and kept a good fire and were no more assaulted.

I was at no charge in building only labour, which I thought my time well spent in having nothing else to do. I made two rooms of it, one my boy lay in and that was my kitchen and the other I lodged in myself. The walls were only sticks set upright and cross sticks tied to them and so daubed

¹ the palm ; see Chapter XI.

A FISH MY SOUL LONGED FOR

over on both sides with tempered clay which at first as it dried would crack but after two or three times daubing over again it did not crack but was very smooth. Note, they have no trowels in the country but do all this plastering work with their hands and to smooth the walls they wet their hands in water and so smooth it, but to make my lodging room more handsome (knowing no better) I daubed it with fine lime that it was very white. But in doing this I committed a capital offence: for none may white their houses with lime, that being peculiar to royal houses and temples. But being a stranger nothing was made of it, because I did it in ignorance: had it been a native that had so done, it is most probable it would have cost him his head, or at the least a great fine.

Then I made three *guales*, as they call them, or benches, for myself and friends when they came to sit on or sleep on, one at each end and the other against the wall opposite to the door.

Being settled in my new house, I began to keep hogs and hens; which by God's blessing thrived very well with me, and were a great help unto me. I had also a great benefit by living in this garden. For all the coconuts that fell down they gave me, which afforded me oil to burn in the lamp, and also to fry my meat in. Which oil being new is but little inferior to this country's butter.

In this manner we all lived, seeing but very little sign that we might build upon, to look for liberty. The chief of our hopes of it was, that in process of time when we were better acquainted, we might run away. Which some of our people attempted to do too soon, before they knew well which way

MY RESIDENCE AT LEGUNDENIYA

to go, and were taken by the inhabitants. For it is the custom of the Sinhalese to suspect all white people, they meet travelling in the country, to be runaways; and to examine them: and if they cannot give satisfactory answers, they will lay hold of them and carry them back unto the city. Where they will keep them prisoners under a guard of soldiers in an open house like a barn with a little victuals sometimes, and sometimes with none at all. Where they have no other remedy to help themselves but begging. And in this condition they may lie perhaps for their lifetime, being so kept for a spectacle unto the people.

CHAPTER IV

MY RESIDENCE AT LEGUNDENIYA

ALL of us in this manner remained until the year MDCLXIV. At which time arrived a letter on our behalf to the King from the Right Worshipful Sir Edward Winter, Governor of Fort St George, and Agent there. The Dutch Ambassador also at that time by a commission from the Governor of Colombo treated with the King for us. With Sir Edward's message the King was much pleased, and with the Dutch's mediation so prevailed with, that he promised he would send us away.

Upon this he commanded us all to be brought to the city. Whither when we came, we were very joyful not only upon the hopes of our liberty, but also upon the sight of one another.

Some few days after our arrival at the city, we

MY RESIDENCE AT LEGUNDENIYA

were all called to the court. At which time standing all of us in one of the palace courtyards, the nobles by command from the King came forth and told us, that it was His Majesty's pleasure to grant unto us our liberty, and to send us home to our country, and that we should not any more look upon ourselves as prisoners or detained men. At which we bowed our heads and thanked His Majesty.

In the next place they told us. It was the King's pleasure to let us understand, that all those that were willing to stay and serve His Majesty, should have very great rewards, as towns, money, slaves and places of honour conferred upon them. Which all in general refused.

Then we were bidden to absent, while they returned our answers to the King. By and by there came order to call us in one at a time, where to former promises were repeated to every one of us of great favours, honours and rewards from the King to those that were willing to stay with him. And after each one had given his answer, he was sent into a corner in the court, and then another called, and so all round one after another, they inquiring particularly concerning each man's trade and office; handicraftsmen and trumpeters being most desired by the King. We being thus particularly examined again, there was not one of us was tempted by the King's rewards, but all in general refused the King's honourable employment, choosing rather to go to our native country. By which we purchased the King's displeasure.

After this they told us, we must wait at the palace gate daily, it being the King's pleasure, that we should make our personal appearance before him.

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In this manner we waited many days. At length happened a thing which he least suspected, viz. a general rebellion of his people against him.

The tumults being appeased, and the rebellion vanished, the King was settled in his throne again. And all this happened in five days' time. We were now greatly necessitated for food, and wanted some fresh orders from the King's mouth for our future subsistence. So that having no other remedy, we were fain to go and lie in the highway that leads to the city a-begging; for the people would not let us go any nearer towards the King, as we would have done. There therefore we lay, that the King might come to the knowledge of us, and give command for our allowance again. By which means we obtained our purpose. For having lain there some two months, the King was pleased to appoint our quarters in the country as formerly, not mentioning a word of sending us away, as he had made us believe before the rebellion.

Now we were all sent away indeed, but not into our own country, but into new quarters. We were thus dispersed about the towns here one and there another, for the more convenient receiving our allowance, and for the greater ease of the people. And now we were far better to pass than heretofore, having the language, and being acquainted with the manners and customs of the people, and had the same proportion of victuals, and the like respect as formerly. And now they fell into employments as they please, either husbandry or merchandising, or knitting caps, being altogether free to do what they will themselves, and to go where they will,

MY RESIDENCE AT LEGUNDENIYA

excepting running away: and for that end, we are not permitted to go down to the sea, but we may travel all about the country, and no man regards us. For though the people some of the first years of our captivity, would scarcely let us go any whither, and had an eye upon us afterwards, yet in process of time all their suspicions of our getting away wore off; especially when several of the English had built them houses, and others had taken them wives, by whom they had children, to the number of eighteen living when I came away.

My hap was to be quartered in a country called Dayaladahamuna Pattuva, lying to the westward of the city of Kandy. Which place liked me very well, being much nearer to the sea than where I dwelt before, which gave me some probable hopes, that in time I might chance to make an escape. But in the meantime to free myself from the suspicion of the people, who watched me by night, and by day had an eye to all my actions, I went to work with the help of some of my neighbours to build me another house upon the bank of a river, and entrenched it round with a ditch, and planted a hedge and made two doors both fore and back door, and planted my garden with fruit trees, sparing no labour, and began to take delight in this habitation, but not such as altered my inclination to make an escape when God gave me an opportunity, who to show me the vanity in seeking content in things on earth, when I had but just finished this house and lodged in it but some few nights the Dutch came with an army and took possession of the next county called Beligal Korale, that so frightened the people where I was that they all removed into the woods,

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driving their cattle before and burying their corn in the ground, and myself and the other three Englishmen that were near were all carried up into the mountains leaving most that I had got (being in trade) behind me and thus I lost all my labours a second time, yet God continued my daily bread, for the manna ceased not, I mean the King's allowance.

This invasion happening so unexpectedly and our remove so sudden, I was forced to leave behind me that little estate which God had given me, lying scattered abroad in betel-nuts, the great commodity of that country, which I was then parting from: and much ado I had to get my clothes brought along with me, the enemies, as they called them, but my friends being so near. And thus was I carried out of this country as poor as I came into it, leaving all the fruits of my labour and industry behind me. Which called to my remembrance the words of Job. 'Naked came I into this world, and naked shall I return: God gave and God had taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

We were brought up together into a town on the top of a mountain called Legundeniya. Where I and my dear friend and fellow prisoner, and fellow bachelor Mr John Loveland lived together in one house. For by this time not many of our people were as we, that is, single men; but seeing so little hopes, despaired of their liberty, and had taken wives.

At our first coming into this town, we were very much dismayed, it being one of the most dismal places that I have seen upon that land. It stands alone upon the top of a mountain, and no other town near it, and not above four or five houses in

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it. And oftentimes into this town did the King use to send such malefactors as he was minded suddenly to cut off. Upon these accounts our being brought to this place could not but scare us, and the more, because it was the King's special order and command to place us in this very town.

The place where I was carried to was on the top of a hill environed with mountains on which were but few trees, but all overgrown with a long sort of grass they call *manacoll*, in some places up to the knees, in others up to the middle, that here was no walking but in the paths the cattle made and the ground stony and uneven. In the dry season, which is about January, they set on fire and burn this long grass, which will run over whole mountains till some small running brook of water interposes, of which there are many, and then they will fire it again on the other side: this they do for food for their cattle, who care not to eat the old ripe grass but love to feed on the young new-sprung grass, and also that they may the better pass to and fro, which they cannot well do in the long grass.

Here I could take no manner of delight, only think how to get out of it, and therefore contented myself with the house the people gave me, indeed I had a very pleasant prospect of the great river called Mahaveli Ganga, near as broad as the Thames, just below me and of the beautiful and pleasant countries of Udunuvara and Yatinuvara (in the former I after dwelt) and towns situated on that riverside, but this added to my vexation to see such a fine country so near and I must dwell on the top of a dismal mountain often covered with clouds.

I used the utmost of my skill and endeavour to get

MY RESIDENCE AT LEGUNDENIYA

a licence to go down to my former quarters, all things being now pretty well settled, hoping that I might recover some of my old debts; but by no means could I obtain it. The denial of so reasonable a desire, put me upon taking leave. I was well acquainted with the way, but yet I hired a man to go with me, without which I could not get through the watches. For although I was the master and he the man, yet when we came into the watches, he was the keeper and I the prisoner. And by this means we passed without being suspected.

Being come into my old quarters, by pretending that this man was sent down from the magistrate to see that my debts and demands might be duly paid and discharged, I chanced to recover some of them, and the rest gave over for lost; for I never more looked after them. And so I began the world anew, and by the blessing of God was again pretty well recruited¹ before I left this town.

In the time of my residence here, I chanced to hear of a small piece of land that was to be sold. About which I made very diligent inquiry. For although I was sore a-weary of living in this town, yet I could not get out of it, not having other new quarters appointed me, unless I could provide a place for myself to remove to: which now God had put into my hands. As for the King's command I dreaded it not much, having found by observation, that the King's orders wear away by time, and the neglect of them comes at last to be unregarded. However, I was resolved to put it to a hazard, come what will.

Although I had been now some seven or eight

¹ set up financially.

MY RESIDENCE AT LEGUNDENIYA

years in this land, and by this time came to know pretty well the customs and constitutions of the nation, yet I would not trust my own knowledge, but to prevent the worst, I went to the Governor of that same country where the land lay, to desire his advice, whether or no I might lawfully buy that small piece of land. He inquired, whose and what land it was, I informed him, that it had been formerly dedicated to a priest, and he at his death had left it to his grandson: who for want was forced to sell it. Understanding this, the Governor approved of the business, and encouraged me to buy it: saying, that such kind of lands only were lawful here to be bought and sold; and that this was not in the least litigious.¹

Having got both his consent and advice, I went on cheerfully with my purchase. The place also liked me wondrous well; it being a point of land, standing into a cornfield, so that cornfields were on three sides of it, and just before my door a little corn ground belonging thereto, and very well watered. In the ground besides eight coconut trees, there were all sorts of fruit trees the country afforded. But it had been so long desolate, that it was all overgrown with bushes, and no sign of a house therein.

The price of this land was five-and-twenty *larees*,² that is five dollars, a great sum of money in the account of this country; yet thanks be to God, who had so far enabled me after my late and great loss, that I was strong enough to lay this down.

¹ disputable at law.

² larins—a kind of Persian and Arabic money in the form of a strip of metal bent over in the shape of a hook.

MY RESIDENCE AT LEGUNDENIYA

The terms of purchase being concluded on between us, a writing was made upon a leaf after that country manner, witnessed by seven or eight men of the best quality in the town: which was delivered to me, and I paid the money, and then took possession of the land. It lies some ten miles to the southward of the city of Kandy in the county of Udunuvara, in the town of Eladetta.

Now I went about building an house upon my land, and was assisted by three of my countrymen that dwelt nearby, Roger Gold, Ralph Knight, and Stephen Rutland, and in short time we finished it. The country people were all well pleased to see us thus busy ourselves about buying of land and building of houses, thinking it would tie our minds the faster to their country, and make us think the less upon our own.

Concerning the house I built there I have but little to add, but this house standing on my own ground I built it with better stuff or wood and bigger than either of my former two houses: here my doors to each of the close houses¹ were of plank with staples and padlocks to hang thereon, as indeed here was more need, being many thieves of outlandish people that are either slaves to great men or inhabitants, whereas the natural born Sinhalese so much abhors thievery that I never knew any practice it.

The ground on which my house stood was sloping that required much labour to level it by bringing the earth from the higher part and raising the lower that I might have a level to walk on, which at length with much pains I did effect and made thorn-gates

¹ buildings (houses) close to the main building.

MY ESTATE AT ELADETTA

(as great men have) both before my house down into my rice-field and behind it also to go out that way, to both which I had bars that none could come in when they were shut.

The field I had lay joining to my ground all in one piece which was well watered and a curious running spring of water very near for my house use. Had I tilled this field myself it would afford rice enough for my own eating all the year, but I could more profitably employ my time in knitting caps and afterwards when I left knitting by the trade I was fallen into by lending corn, I had no need; therefore I let the field to be tilled and deducting the seed-corn sowed, one half (deducting some small customary charges) was my own for the use of the ground and thus I managed my field every year.

CHAPTER V

MY ESTATE AT ELADETTA

THOUGH I had built my new house, yet durst I not yet leave my old quarters in Legundeniya, but wait until a more convenient time fell out for that purpose. I went away therefore to my old home, and left my aforesaid three English neighbours to inhabit it in my absence. Not long after I found a fit season to be gone to my estate at Eladetta. And upon my going, the rest left the town also, and went and dwelt elsewhere, each one where he best liked. But by this means we all lost a privilege which we had before: which was that our victuals were brought unto us, and now we were forced to

MY ESTATE AT ELADETTA

go and fetch them ourselves; the people alleging (true enough) that they were not bound to carry our provisions about the country after us.

Being settled in my new house, I began to plant my ground full of all sorts of fruit trees; and by the blessing of God all grew and prospered, and yielded me great plenty, and good increase, sufficient both for me, and for those that dwelt with me. For the three Englishmen I left at my house when I departed back to Legundeniya, still lived with me. We were all single men; and we agreed very well together, and were helpful to one another. And for their help and assistance of me, I freely granted them liberty to use and enjoy whatsoever the ground afforded, as much as myself. And with a joint consent it was concluded amongst us, that only single men and bachelors should dwell there, and such as would not be conformable to this present agreement, should depart and absent himself from our society, and also forfeit his right and claim to the fore-mentioned privilege, that is, to be cut off from all benefit of whatsoever the trees and ground afforded.

I thought fit to make such a covenant, to exclude women from coming in among us, to prevent all strife and dissension, and to make all possible provision for the keeping up love and quietness among ourselves.

In this manner we four lived together some two years very lovingly and contentedly, not an ill word passing between us. We used to take turns in keeping at home, while the rest went forth about their business. For our house stood alone and no neighbour near it. Therefore we always left one within. The rest of the Englishmen lived round



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MY ESTATE AT ELADETTA

about us, some four or five miles distant, some more. So that we were, as it were, within reach one of another; which made us like our present situation the more. Thus we lived upon the mountains, being round about us beset with watches, most of our people being now married: so that now all talk and suspicion of our running away was laid aside. Neither indeed was it scarce possible. The effect of which was, that now we could walk from one to the other, or where we would upon the mountains, no man molesting or disturbing us in the least. So that we began to go about peddling, and trading in the country farther towards the northward, carrying our caps about to sell.

I have written that my choice and chief friend Mr John Loveland and I dwelt together in one house at Legundeniya, which when I left and went to my own house in Eladetta, he also removed from Legundeniya into his own quarters at Gampola where he had his allowance or maintenance by the King's order when he dwelt in Legundeniya, which was an ease both to himself and the people that before used to carry it to Legundeniya to him. In the same town of Gampola I had my allowance which I fetched and carried myself on my back to my house at Eladetta which was about four miles distance. Some years after Mr Loveland began to fall sickly, and had a mind to come and be with me at my house in Eladetta, we being four Englishmen together, for though he had then with him a black boy to dress his victuals, etc., yet he wanted me and English company, which I as willingly assented to knowing we could be more helpful and comfortable in a heathen country.

MY ESTATE AT ELADETTA

After his coming to my house his disease increased to running pain from one part of his body to another exceeding violent (which kind of pains are usual in this country) that made him roar out, some little intermission now and then between fits as the pains shifted from one part of his body to the other which commonly kill those that are so seized, as it did him. His last fit being very violent I took him up in my arms and his head lay on my left shoulder. He was in his perfect senses and earnestly prayed to God either to ease him or remove him hence by death, repeating a sentence in *The Practice of Piety* (which book he had with him when taken prisoner here), viz. that his Saviour had endured far more for him and why should not he meekly submit to His blessed will, and bade me equally to divide that small substance God had given him which was about fifty shillings to the three Englishmen, viz. Stephen Rutland, Ralph Knight and Roger Gold that dwelt with me, giving me only a silver tobacco-pipe saying God had blessed me to have no want and they were poor, but his clothes and what I thought fit more he bade me to give to his boy who had served him well. These three men were then all absent (the two former since escaped and died here in England). He added no more but groans and earnest prayers to God, till he gave up the ghost, which was on the 22nd of October, anno 1670, in my arms. In all my life I never had such an entire intimate friend as he; I may compare us like Jonathan and David. He often told me that this captivity was the greatest of mercies that ever God had bestowed on him, having so long absented the church that he was afraid to look into it at last, and

MY ESTATE AT ELADETTA

concluded that if God had then snatched him away by death he had perished. He was in the whole course of his captivity an exceeding pious and devout man, and enjoyed the sweet stock of it at his departure as not daunted at death but in full assurance of God's mercy to him in Christ Jesus.

We four buried him as decently as our circumstances would permit just behind my house, and I do from my heart affirm, God and my conscience being witness, I did perform his will punctually and was better pleased he had so charitably disposed his (all) estate than if he had given it to myself, which I know he did not for want of love but to relieve the needy.

By this time two of our company seeing but little hope of liberty, thought it too hard a task thus to lead a single life, and married. Which when they had done according to the former agreement departed from us. So that our company was now reduced to two, viz. myself and Stephen Rutland; whose inclination and resolution was as steadfast as mine against marriage. And we parted not to the last, but came away together.

We lived solitarily and contentedly being well settled in a good house of my own. Now we fell to breeding up goats: we began with two, but by the blessing of God they soon came to a good many; and their flesh served us instead of mutton.¹ We kept hens and hogs also: and seeing no sudden likelihood of liberty, we went about to make all things handsome and convenient about us: which might be serviceable to us, while we lived there,

¹ The flesh of sheep, and not, according to popular misunderstanding in Ceylon, of goats.

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and might further our liberty whensoever we should see an occasion to attempt it: which it did, in taking away all suspicion from the people concerning us: who not having wives as the others had, they might well think, lay the readier to take any advantage to make an escape. Which indeed we two did plot and consult about, between ourselves with all imaginable privacy, long before we got away: and therefore we laboured by all means to hide our designs: and to free them from so much as suspicion. We had now brought our house and ground to such a perfection that few noblemen's seats in the land did excel us. On each side was a great thorn-gate for entrance, which is the manner in that country: the gates of the city are of the same. We built also another house in the yard all open for air, for ourselves to sit in, or any neighbours that came to talk to us. For seldom should we be alone, our neighbours oftener frequenting our house than we desired; out of whom to be sure we could pick no profit. For their coming is always either to beg or borrow. For although we were strangers and prisoners in their land, yet they would confess that Almighty God had dealt far more bountifully with us than with them in that we had a far greater plenty of all things than they.

I now began to set up a new trade. For the trade of knitting was grown dead, and husbandry I could not follow, not having a wife to help and assist me therein, a great part of husbandry properly belonging to the woman to manage. Whereupon I perceived a trade in use among them, which was to lend out corn. The benefit of which is fifty per cent per annum. This I saw to be the easiest and

MY ESTATE AT ELADETTA

most profitable way of living, whereupon I took in hand to follow it: and what stock I had, I converted into corn or rice in the husk. And now as customers came for corn I let them have it, to receive their next harvest, when their own corn was ripe the same quantity I lent them, and half as much more. But as the profit is great, so is the trouble of getting it in also. For he that uses this trade must watch when the debtor's field is ripe, and claim his due in time otherwise other creditors coming before will seize all upon the account of their debts, and leave no corn at all for those that come later. For these that come thus a-borrowing, generally carry none of their corn home when it is ripe, for their creditors ease them of that labour by coming into their fields and taking it, and commonly they have not half enough to pay what they owe. So that they that miss getting their debts this year must stay till the next when it will be double, two measures for one: but the interest never runs up higher, though the debt lie seven years unpaid. By means hereof I was put to a great deal of trouble, and was forced to watch early and late to get my debts, and many times miss of them after all my pains. Howbeit when my stock did increase that I had dealings with many, I mattered not¹ if I lost in some places, the profit of the rest was sufficient to bear that out.

And thus by the blessing of God my little was increased to a great deal.

It was now about the year MDCLXXIII. I and my companion were still meditating upon our escape and the means to compass it. Which our peddling

¹ I did not care.

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about the country did greatly forward and promote, for speaking well the language and going with our commodities from place to place, we used often to entertain discourse with the country people, viz. concerning the ways and the country, and where there were most and fewest inhabitants, and where and how the watches were laid from one country to another; and what commodities were proper to carry from one part to the other, pretending we would from time to time go from one place to another, to furnish ourselves with ware that the respective places afforded. None doubted but we had made these inquiries for the sake of our trade, but ourselves had other designs in them. Neither was there the least suspicion of us for these our questions: all supposing I would never run away and leave such an estate as in their accounts and esteem I had.

By diligent inquiry I had come to understand, that the easiest and most probable way to make an escape was by travelling to the northward, that part of the land being least inhabited. Therefore we furnished ourselves with such ware as were vendible in those parts, as tobacco, pepper, garlic, combs, all sorts of iron ware, etc., and being laden with these things, we two set forth, bending our course towards the northern parts of the island, knowing very little of the way; and the ways of this country generally are intricate and difficult: here being no great highways that run through the land, but a multitude of little paths, some from one town to another, some into the fields, and some into the woods where they sow their corn; and the whole country covered with woods, that a man cannot

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see anything but just before him. And that which makes them most difficult of all is, that the ways shift and alter, new ways often made and old ways stopped up. For they cut down woods, and sow the ground, and having got one crop off from it, they leave it, and wood soon grows over it again: and in case a road went through those woods, they stop it, and contrive another way; neither do they regard though it goes two or three miles about: and to ask and inquire the way for us white men is very dangerous, it occasioning the people to suspect us. And the Sinhalese themselves never travel in country where they are not experienced in the ways without a guide, it being so difficult. And there was no getting a guide to conduct us down to the sea.

We travelled to and fro where the ways led us, according to their own proverb, 'The beggar and the merchant are never out of his way'; because the one begs and the other trades wherever they go. Thus we used to ramble until we had sold all our wares, and then went home for more. And by these means we grew acquainted both with the people and the paths.

CHAPTER VI

ESCAPE TO ANURADHAPURA

HAVING often gone this way to seek for liberty, but could not yet find it; we again set forth to try what success God Almighty would now give us, the year MDCLXXIX, on the two-and-twentieth of September, furnished with such arms as we could

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well carry with safety and secrecy, which were knives and small axes; we carried also several sorts of ware to sell as formerly: the moon being seven-and-twenty days old. Which we had so contrived, that we might have a light moon, to see the better to run away by: having left an old man at home, whom I had hired to live with me, to look after my house and goats.

We went down at the hill Bokalavela, where there was now no watch, and but seldom any. From thence down to the town of Bandara Kosvatta, where my father died; and by the town of Nikavehera, which is the last town belonging to the Seven Korales in that road. From thence forward the towns stand thin. For it was sixteen miles to the next town called Paravahagama which lay in the country of Nuvarakeleviya, and all the way through a wilderness called Paravahagama Mukalana, full of wild elephants, tigers and bears.

Now we set our design for Anuradhapura, which is the lowest place inhabited belonging to the King of Kandy: where there is a watch always kept: and nearer than twelve or fourteen miles of the town as yet we never had been.

When we came into the midst of this country, we heard that the Governor thereof had sent officers from the court to dispatch away the King's revenues and duties to the city, and that they were now come into the country. Which put us into no small fear, lest if they saw us they should send us back again. Wherefore we edged away into the westernmost parts of Eppavala Korale, being a remote part of that country wherein we now were. And there we set to knitting until we heard they were

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gone. But this caused us to overshoot our time, the moon spending so fast. But as soon as we heard they were departed out of the country, we went onwards of our journey, having kept most of our ware for a pretence to have an occasion to go farther. And having bought a good parcel of cotton yarn to knit caps withal, the rest of our ware we gave out, was to buy dried flesh with, which only in those lower parts is to be sold.

Our way now lay necessarily through the Chief Governor's yard at Kaluvila. Who dwells there purposely to see and examine all that go and come. This greatly distressed us. First, because he was a stranger to us, and one whom we had never seen. And secondly, because there was no other way to escape him: and plain reason would tell him, that we being prisoners were without our bounds. Whereupon we concluded, that our best way would be to go boldly and resolutely to his house, and not to seem daunted in the least, or to look as if we did distrust him to disallow of our journey, but to show such a behaviour, as if we had authority to travel where we would.

So we went forward, and were forced to inquire and ask the way to his house, having never been so far this way before. I brought from home with me knives with fine carved handles, and a red Tunis' cap purposely to sell or give him, if occasion required, knowing before, that we must pass by him. And all along as we went, that we might be the less suspected, we sold caps and other ware, to be paid for at our return homewards. There were many

¹ H. W. Codrington calls these '*Jagalat toppi*' (*Notes on some Principal Kandyan Chiefs and Headmen and their Dresses*, 1910).

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cross paths to and fro to his house, yet by God's providence we happened in the right road. And having reached his house, according to the country manner we went and sat down in the open house; which kind of houses are built on purpose for the reception of strangers. Whither not long after the great man himself came and sat down by us. To whom we presented a small parcel of tobacco, and some betel. And before he asked us the cause of our coming, we showed him the ware we brought for him, and the cotton yarn which we had trucked about the country: telling him withal how the case stood with us: viz. that we had a charge¹ greater than the King's allowance would maintain; and that because dried flesh was the chief commodity of that part, we told him, that missing of the lading² which we used to carry back, we were glad to come thither to see, if we could make it up with dried flesh. And therefore if he would please to supply us either for such ware as we had brought or else for our money, it would be a great favour, the which would oblige us for the future to bring him any necessaries that he should name unto us, when we should come again unto those parts, as we used to do very often: and that we could furnish him, having dealings and being acquainted with the best artificers in Kandy.

At which he replied, that he was sorry we were come at such a dry time, wherein they could not catch deer, but if some rain fell, he would soon dispatch us with our loadings of flesh. But, however, he bade us to go about the towns, and see whether there might be any or no, though he thought there

¹ expenses.

² goods (freight).

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was none. This answer of his pleased us wondrous well, both because by this we saw he suspected us not, and because he told us there was no dried flesh to be got. For it was one of the greatest fears that we should get our lading too soon: for then, we could not have had an excuse to go farther. And as yet we could not possibly fly having still six miles farther to the northward to go before we could attempt it, that is, to Anuradhapura.

From Anuradhapura it is two days journey farther through a desolate wilderness before there are any more inhabitants. And these inhabitants are neither under this King nor the Dutch, but are Malabars and are under a prince of their own. This people we were sorely afraid of, lest they might seize us and send us back, there being a correspondence between this prince and the King of Kandy; wherefore it was our endeavour by all means to shun them; lest according to the old proverb, we might leap out of the frying-pan into the fire.

In the meantime happened an accident which put us to a great fright. For the King having newly clapped up¹ several persons of quality, sent down soldiers to this High Sheriff or Governor, at whose house we now were, to give him order to set a secure guard at the watches, that no suspicious persons might pass. This he did to prevent the relations of these imprisoned persons from making an escape, who through fear of the King might attempt it. This always is the King's custom to do. But it put us into an exceeding fear, lest it might beget an admiration in these soldiers to see white men so low down: which indeed is not customary nor

¹ imprisoned.

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allowed of: and so they might send us up again. Which doubtless they would have done, had it not been of God by this means and after His manner to deliver us. Especially considering that the King's command came just at that time and so expressly to keep a secure guard at the watches, and that in that very way that always we purposed to go in: so that it seemed scarcely possible for us to pass afterwards, though we should get off fairly at present with the soldiers.

Which we did. For they having delivered their message, departed, showing themselves very kind and civil unto us. And we seemed to lament for our hard fortune, that we were not ready to go upwards with them in their good company: for we were neighbours dwelling in one and the same county. However we bid them carry our commendations to our countrymen the English, with whom they were acquainted at the city, and so bade them farewell. And glad we were when they were gone from us. And the next day in the morning we resolved, God willing, to set forward. But we thought not fit to tell our host, the Governor, of it, till the very instant of our departing, that he might not have any time to deliberate concerning us.

That night he being disposed to be merry, sent for people whose trade it is to dance and show tricks, to come to his house to entertain him with their sports. The beholding them spent most part of the night. Which we merrily called our old host's civility to us at our last parting: as it proved indeed, though he, honest man, then little dreamed of any such thing.

The morning being come, we first took care to

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fill our bellies; then we packed up those things which were necessary for our journey to carry with us, and the rest of our goods, cotton yarn, and cloth and other things, that we would not encumber ourselves withal, we bound up in a bundle, intending to leave them behind us. This being done, I went to the Governor, and carried him four or five charges of gunpowder, a thing somewhat scarce with them, entreating him rather than we should be disappointed of flesh, to make use of that and shoot some deer; which he was very willing to accept of, and to us it could be no ways profitable, not having a gun. While we, we told him, would make a step to Anuradhapura to see what flesh we could procure there. In the meantime according as we had before laid the business, came Stephen with the bundle of goods, desiring to leave them in his house, till we came back. Which he was very ready to grant us leave to do. And seeing us leave such a parcel of goods, though, God knows, but of little account in themselves, yet of considerable value in that land, he could not suppose otherwise but that we were intended to return again. Thus we took our leaves, and immediately departed, not giving him time to consider with himself, or consult with others about us. And he like a good-natured man bade us heartily farewell.

Although we knew not the way to this town having never been there in all our lives, and durst not ask, lest it might breed suspicion; yet we went on confidently through a desolate wood: and happened to go very right, and came out directly at the place.

But in our way before we arrived hither, we came up with a small river, which ran through the woods,

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called by the Sinhalese, Malvatta Oya: the which we viewed well, and judged it might be a probable guide to carry us down to the sea, if a better did not present. Howbeit we thought good to try first the way we were taking, and to go onward towards Anuradhapura, that being the shortest and easiest way to get to the coast: and this river being as under our lee,¹ ready to serve and assist us, if other means failed.

To Anuradhapura therefore we came, which is not so much a particular single town as a territory. It is a vast great plain, the like I never saw in all that island: in the midst whereof is a lake, which may be a mile over, not natural, but made by art, as other ponds in the country, to serve them to water their corn grounds. This plain is encompassed round with woods and small towns among them on every side, inhabited by Malabars, a distinct people from the Sinhalese. But these towns we could not see till we came in among them. Being come out through the woods into this plain, we stood looking and staring round about us, but knew not where nor which way to go. At length we heard a cock crow, which was a sure sign to us that there was a town hard by; into which we were resolved to enter. For standing thus amazed, was the ready way to be taken up for suspicious persons, especially because white men never came down so low.

Being entered into this town, we sat ourselves under a tree, and proclaimed our wares, for we feared to rush into their yards, as we used to do in other places, lest we should scare them. The people stood amazed as soon as they saw us, being originally

¹ being as a protection to us.

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Malabars, though subjects of Kandy. Nor could they understand the Sinhalese language in which we spake to them. And we stood looking one upon another until there came one that could speak the Sinhalese tongue: who asked us, from whence we came? We told him, from Kandy. But they believed us not, supposing that we came up from the Dutch from Manaar. So they brought us before their Governor. He not speaking Sinhalese spake to us by an interpreter. And to know the truth, whether we came from the place we pretended, he inquired about news at court; demanded, who were Governors of such and such countries? and what was become of some certain noblemen, whom the King had lately cut off? and also what the common people were employed about at court, for it is seldom that they are idle. To all which we gave satisfactory answers. Then he inquired of us, who gave us leave to come down so low? We told him, that privilege was given to us by the King himself full fifteen years since at his palace at Nilambe Nuvara, when he caused it to be declared unto us, that we were no longer prisoners, and (which indeed was our own addition) that we were free to enjoy the benefit of trade in all his dominions.

To prove and confirm the truth of which, we alleged the distance of the way that we were now come from home, being near an hundred miles, passing through several counties, where we met with several Governors and officers in their respective jurisdictions; who had they not been well sensible of these privileges granted us, would not have allowed us to pass through their countries. All which officers we described to him by name;

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and also that now we came from the High Sheriff's house at Kaluvila, where we had been these three days, and there heard of the order that was come to secure the watches; which was not for fear of the running away of white men, but of the Sinhalese. These reasons gave him full satisfaction, that we were innocent traders, seeing also the commodities that we had brought with us: this further confirmed his opinion concerning us.

The people were very glad of our coming, and gave us an end of an open house to lie in: but at present they had no dried flesh, but desired us to stay two or three days and we should not fail: which we were very ready to consent to, hoping by that time to come to the knowledge of the way, and to learn where about the watch was placed.

Here we stayed three days; during which we had found the great road that runs down towards Jaffna, one of the nothern ports belonging to the Dutch, which road we judged led also towards Manaar, a Dutch northern port also, which was the place that we endeavoured to get to, lying above two or three days' journey distant from us. But in this road there was a watch laid, which must be passed. Where this watch was placed, it was necessary for us punctually¹ to know, and to endeavour to get a sight of it. And if we could do this, our intent was to go unseen by night, the people being then afraid to travel, and being come up to the watch, to slip aside into the woods, and so go on until we were past it; and then strike into the road again. But this project came to nothing, because I could not without suspicion

¹ exactly.

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and danger go and view this watch; which lay some four or five miles below this plain; and so far I could not frame any business to go.

But several inconveniences we saw here, insomuch that we found it would not be safe for us to go down in this road. For if we should have slipped away from them by night, in the morning we should be missed, and then most surely they would go that way to chase us, and ten to one overtake us, being but one night before them. Also we knew not whether or no, it might lead us into the country of the Malabar prince of whom we were much afraid.

Then resolving to let the great road alone, we thought of going right down through the woods, and steer our course by the sun and moon: but the ground being so dry we feared we should not meet with water. So we declined that counsel also. Thus being in doubt, we prayed God to direct us, and to put it into our hearts which way to take. Then after a consultation between ourselves, all things considered, we concluded it the best course to go back to the Malvatta Oya, the river we had well viewed that lay in our way as we came hither. And back thither we resolved to repair.

CHAPTER VII

THE WILDERNESS

Now God of His mercy having prospered our design hitherto, for which we blessed His holy name, our next care was how to come off clear from the people of Anuradhapura, that they might not presently

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miss us, and so pursue after us. Which if they should do, there would have been no escaping them. For from this town to Kaluvila, where the Sheriff lived, with whom we left our goods, they are as well acquainted in the woods as in the paths. And when we came away we must tell the people, that we were going thither, because there is no way but that. Now our fear was, lest upon some occasion or other any men might chance to travel that way soon after we were gone, and not finding us at Kaluvila, might conclude, as they could do no otherwise, that we were run into the woods. Therefore to avoid this danger, we stayed in the town till it was so late, that we knew none durst venture to travel afterwards for fear of wild beasts. By which means we were sure to gain a night's travel at least, if they should chance to pursue us.

So we took our leaves of the Governor, who kindly gave us a pot of milk to drink for a farewell; we telling him, we were returning back to the Sheriff at Kaluvila, to whom we had given some gunpowder when we came from him to shoot us some deer, and we doubted not but by that time we should get to him, he would have provided flesh enough for our lading home. Thus bidding him and the rest of the neighbours farewell, we departed, they giving us the civility of their accustomed prayers, *Diabat*,¹ that is, God bless, or keep you.

¹ A satisfactory explanation of this expression has long been wanting. The first edition (1681) prints *Diabac*, but in the Errata this is altered to *Diabat*. Donald Ferguson's suggestion that Knox put down the equivalent in English letters of the Sinhalese *deyiyo raku* is not helpful; *Diabat* is not close enough phonetically to it, besides it is not a common expression. Bhikkhu W. Rahula suggested *deyi pihitayi* which is a common expression even today.

THE WILDERNESS

It was now the twelfth day of October on a Sunday, the moon eighteen days old. We were well furnished with all things needful, which we could get, viz. ten days' provision, rice, flesh, fish, pepper, salt, a basin to boil our victuals in, two calabashes to fetch water, two great tallipots for tents, big enough to sleep under if it should rain, jaggery and sweetmeats, which we brought from home with us, tobacco also and betel, tinder-boxes two or three for failing,¹ and a deer's skin to make us shoes, to prevent any thorns running into our feet as we travelled through the woods; for our greatest trust under God was to our feet. Our weapons were, each man a small axe fastened to a long staff in our hands, and a good knife by our sides. Which were sufficient with God's help to defend us from the assaults of either tiger or bear; and as for elephants there is no standing against them, but the best defence is to flee from them.

In this posture and equipage we marched forward. When we were come within a mile of this river, it being about four in the evening, we began to fear, lest any of the people of Anuradhapura from whence we came, should follow us to Kaluvila. Which place we never intended to come at more: the river along which we intended to go lying on this side of it. That we might be secure therefore that no people came after us, we sat down upon a rock by a hole that was full of water in the highway; until it was so late, that we were sure no people durst travel. In case any had come after us, and seen us sitting there and gotten no farther, we intended to tell them, that one of us was taken sick

¹ in case (one) should fail.

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by the way, and therefore not able to go. But it was our happy chance there came none. So about sundown we took up our sacks of provisions, and marched forward for the river, which under God we had pitched upon to be our guide down to the sea. Being come at the river, we left the road, and struck into the woods by the riverside. We were exceeding careful not to tread on the sand or soft ground, lest our footsteps should be seen; and where it could not be avoided, we went backwards, so that by the print of our feet, it seemed as if we had gone the contrary way. We were now gotten a good way into the wood; when it grew dark and began to rain, so that we thought it best to pitch our tents, and get wood for firing before it was all wet, and too dark to find it. Which we did, and kindled a fire.

Then we began to fit ourselves for our journey against the moon arose.¹ All our sale-wares which we had left we cast away (for we took care not to sell too much), keeping only provisons and what was very necessary for our journey. About our feet we tied pieces of deer's hide to prevent thorns and stumps annoying our feet. We always used to travel barefoot, but now being to travel by night and in the woods, we feared so to do. For if our feet should fail us now, we were quite undone. And by the time we had well fitted ourselves, and were refreshed with a morsel of Portuguese sweetmeats, the moon began to shine. So having commended ourselves into the hands of the Almighty we took up our provisions upon our shoulders, and set forward, and travelled some three or four hours,

¹ in expectation of moonrise.

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but with a great deal of difficulty; for the trees being thick, the moon gave but little light through, but our resolution was to keep going.

Now it was our chance to meet with an elephant in our way just before us: which we tried, but could not scare away: so he forced us to stay. We kindled a fire and sat down, and took a pipe of tobacco, waiting till morning. Then we looked round about us, and it appeared all like a wilderness, and no sign that people ever had been there; which put us in great hopes that we had gained our passage, and were past all the inhabitants. Whereupon we concluded that we were now in no danger of being seen, and might travel in the day securely.

There was only one great road in our way, which led to Puttalam from the towns which by and by we fell into; this road therefore we were shy of, lest when we passed it over, some passengers travelling in it, might see us; and this road we were in expectance about this time to meet withal, secure, as I said before, of all other danger of people. But the river winding about to the northward brought us into the midst of a parcel¹ of towns called Tissa Veva, before we were aware. For the country being all woods, we could not discern where there were towns, until we came within the hearing of them. That which betrayed us into this danger was, that meeting with a path, which only led from one town to another, we concluded it to be that great road above mentioned; and so having passed it over, we supposed the danger we might encounter in being seen, was also passed over with it; but we were mistaken; for going farther we still met with

¹ number, group.

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other paths, which we crossed over, still hoping one or other of them was that great road; but at last we perceived our error; viz. that they were only paths that went from one town to another.

And so while we were avoiding men and towns, we ran into the midst of them. This was a great trouble to us, hearing the noise of people round about us, and knew not how to avoid them; into whose hands we knew if we had fallen, they would have carried us up to the King, besides beating and plundering us to boot.

We knew before that these towns were here away,¹ but had we known that this river turned and ran in among them, we should never have undertaken the enterprise. But now to go back, after we had newly passed so many paths, and fields and places where people did resort, we thought not advisable, and that the danger in so doing might be greater than in going forward. And had we known so much then as afterwards did appear to us, it had been safer for us to have gone on, than to have hid there as we did; which we then thought was the best course we could take for the present extremity: viz. to secure ourselves in secret until night, and then to run through in the dark. All that we now wanted was a hole to creep in to lie close, for the woods thereabouts were thin, and no shrubs or bushes, under which we might be concealed.

We heard the noise of people on every side, and expected every moment to see some of them to our great terror. And it is not easy to say in what danger, and in what apprehension of it we were; it was not safe for us to stir backwards or forwards

¹ hereabouts.

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for fear of running among people, and it was as unsafe to stand still where we were, lest somebody might spy us: and where to find covert we could not tell. Looking about us in these straits we spied a great tree by us, which for the bigness thereof 'tis probable might be hollow. To which we went, and found it so. It was like a tub, some three foot high. Into it immediately we both crept, and made a shift to sit there for several hours, though very uneasily, and all in mud and wet. But however it did greatly comfort us in the fright and amazement we were in.

So soon as it began to grow dark, we came creeping out of our hollow tree, and put for it¹ as fast as our legs could carry us. And then we crossed that great road, which all the day before we did expect to come up with, keeping close by the riverside, and going so long till dark night stopped us. We kept going the longer, because we heard the voice of men halloing towards evening: which created us a fresh disturbance, thinking them to be people that were coming to chase us. But at length we heard elephants behind us, between us and the voice, which we knew by the noise of cracking the boughs and small trees, which they break down and eat. These elephants were a very good guard behind us, and were methought like the darkness that came between Israel and the Egyptians. For the people we knew would not dare to go forwards hearing elephants before them.

In this security we pitched our tents by the riverside, and boiled rice and roasted flesh for our supper, for we were very hungry, and so commending

¹ urged ourselves on.

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ourselves to God's keeping laid down to sleep. The voice which we heard still continued, which lasting so long we knew what it means; it was nothing but the halloing of people that lay to watch the cornfields, to scare away the wild beasts out of their corn. Thus we passed Monday.

But nevertheless next morning so soon as the moon shone out bright, to prevent the worst we took up our packs, and were gone: being past all the tame¹ inhabitants with whom we had no more trouble. But the next day we feared we should come among the wild ones; for these woods are full of them. Of these we were as much afraid as of the other. For they would have carried us back to the King, where we should be kept prisoners, but these we feared would have shot us, not standing to hear us plead for ourselves.

And indeed all along as we went, by the sides of the river till we came to the Malabar inhabitants, had been the tents of wild men, made only of boughs of trees. But God be praised, they were all gone, though but very lately before we came: as we perceived by the bones of cattle, and shells of fruit, which lay scattered about. We supposed that want of water had driven them out of the country down to the riverside, but since it had rained a shower or two they were gone again. Once about noon sitting down upon a rock by the riverside to take a pipe of tobacco and rest ourselves; we had almost been discovered by the women of these wild people, coming down, as I suppose, to wash themselves in the river. Who being many of them, came talking and laughing together. At the first hearing of the noise

¹ as distinct from the wild.

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being a good distance, we marvelled what it was: sitting still and listening, it came nearer a little above where we sat; and at last we could plainly distinguish it to be the voices of women and children. Whereupon we thought it no boot¹ to sit longer, since we could escape undiscovered, and so took up our bags and fled as fast as we could.

Thus we kept travelling every day from morning till night, still along by the riverside, which turned and winded very crooked. In some places it would be pretty good travelling, and but few bushes and thorns, and in others a great many. So that our shoulders and arms were all of a gore, being grievously torn and scratched. For we had nothing on us but a clout about our middles, and our victuals on our shoulders, and in our hands a tallipot and an axe.

The lower we came down this river, the less water, so that sometimes we could go a mile or two upon the sand, and in some places three or four rivers would all meet together. When it happened so, and was noon, the sun over our head, and the water not running, we could not tell which to follow, but were forced to stay till the sun was fallen, thereby to judge of our course. We often met with bears, hogs, deer, and wild buffaloes, but all ran so soon as they saw us. But elephants we met with no more than that I mentioned before. The river is exceeding full of alligators all along as we went; the upper part of it nothing but rocks. Here and there by the side of this river is a world of hewn stone pillars, standing upright, and other heaps of hewn stones, which I suppose formerly were buildings. And in three or

¹ there was no advantage.

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four places are the ruins of bridges built of stone; some remains of them yet standing upon stone pillars. In many places are points built out into the river like wharfs, all of hewn stone; which I suppose have been built for Kings to sit upon for pleasure. For I cannot think they ever were employed for traffic by water; the river being so full of rocks that boats could never come up into it.

The woods in all these northern parts are short and shrubbed,¹ and so they are by the riverside, and the lower the worse; and the grounds so also.

In the evenings we used to pitch our tent, and make a great fire both before and behind us, that the wild beasts might have notice where we lay; and we used to hear the voices of all sorts of them, but, thanks be to God, none ever came near to hurt us. Yet we were the more wary of them, because once a tiger showed us a cheat.² For having bought a deer, and having nothing to salt it up in, we packed it up in the hide thereof salted, and laid it under a bench in an open house, on which I lay that night, and Stephen lay just by it on the ground, and some three people more lay then in the same house; and in the said house a great fire, and another in the yard. Yet a tiger came in the night, and carried deer and hide and all away. But we missing it, concluded it was a thief. We called up the people that lay by us, and told them what had happened. Who informed us that it was a tiger, and with a torch they went to see which way he had gone, and presently found some of it, which he let drop by the way. When it was day we went farther, and picked up more which was

¹ stunted, shrubby.

² played a trick on us.

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scattered, till we came to the hide itself, which remained uneaten.

We had now travelled till Thursday afternoon, when we crossed the river called Kanadara Oya, which was then quite dry; this parts the King's country from the Malabars. We saw no sign of inhabitants here. The woods began to be very full of thorns, and shrubby bushes with clefts and broken land; so that we could not possibly go in the woods; but now the river grew better being clear of rocks, and dry, water only standing in holes. So we marched along in the river upon the sand. Hereabouts are far more elephants than higher up: by day we saw none, but by night the river is full of them.

Friday about nine or ten in the morning we came among the inhabitants. For then we saw the footing of people on the sand, and tame cattle with bells about their necks. Yet we kept on our way right down the river, knowing no other course to take to shun the people. And as we went still forwards we saw *coracan* corn, sowed in the woods, but neither towns nor people: nor so much as the voice of man. But yet we were somewhat dismayed, knowing that we were now in a country inhabited by Malabars. The *Wanniounay* or prince of this people for fear pays tribute to the Dutch, but stands far more affected towards the King of Kandy. Which made our care the greater to keep ourselves out of his hands; fearing lest if he did not keep us himself, he might send us up to our old master. So that great was our terror again, lest meeting with people we might be discovered. Yet there was no means now left us how to avoid the danger of being seen. The woods were so bad, that we could not possibly travel

THE REPROACH OF KANDY ROLLED AWAY in them for thorns; and to travel by night was impossible, it being a dark moon, and the river at nights so full of elephants and other wild beasts coming to drink; as we did both hear and see lying upon the banks with a fire by us. They came in such numbers because there was water for them nowhere else to be had, the ponds and holes of water, nay the river itself in many places being dry.

There was therefore no other way to be taken but to travel on in the river. So down we went into the sand, and put on as fast as we could set our legs to the ground, seeing no people (nor I think nobody us) only buffaloes in abundance in the water.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REPROACH OF KANDY ROLLED AWAY

THUS we went on till about three of the clock afternoon. At which time coming about a point, we came up with two Brahmins on a sudden, who were sitting under a tree boiling rice. We were within forty paces of them; when they saw us they were amazed at us, and as much afraid of us as we were of them. Now we thought it better policy to treat with them than to flee from them; fearing they might have bows and arrows, whereas we were armed only with axes in our hands, and knives by our sides; or else that they might raise the country and pursue us. So we made a stand and in the Sinhalese language asked their leave to come near

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to treat with them, but they did not understand it. But being risen up spake to us in the Malabar tongue, which we could not understand. Then still standing at a distance we intimated our minds to them by signs, beckoning with our hand: which they answered in the same language. Then offering to go towards them, and seeing them to be naked men and no arms near them, we laid our axes upon the ground with our bags, lest we might scare them, if we had come up to them with these weapons in our hands, and so went towards them with only our knives by our sides: by signs with our hands showing them our bloody backs we made them understand whence we came and whither we were going. Which when they perceived they seemed to commiserate with our condition, and greatly to admire at such a miracle which God had brought to pass: and as they talked one to another they lifted their faces towards Heaven often repeating *Tombrane*¹ which is God in the Malabar tongue.

And by their signs we understood they would have us bring our bags and axes nearer; which we had no sooner done, but they brought the rice and herbs which they had boiled for themselves to us, and bade us eat; which we were not fitted to do, having not long before eaten a hearty dinner of better fare; yet could not but thankfully accept of their compassion and kindness, and eat as much as we could; and in requital of their courtesy, we gave them some of our tobacco. Which after much entreating they did receive, and it pleased them exceedingly.

After these civilities passed on either side, we began by signs to desire them to go with us and show

¹ *Tampiranē* in Tamil: the vocative case.

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us the way to the Dutch fort: which they were very unwilling to do, saying, as by signs and some few words which we could understand, that our greatest danger was past, and that by night we might get into the Hollanders' dominions. Yet we being weary with our tedious journey, and desirous to have a guide, showed them money to the value of five shillings, being all I had; and offered it them to go with us. Which together with our great importunity so prevailed, that one of them took it; and leaving his fellow to carry their baggage he went with us about one mile, and then began to take his leave of us, and to return. Which we supposed was to get more from us. Having therefore no more money, we gave him a red Tunis cap and a knife, for which he went a mile farther, and then as before would leave us, signifying to us, that we were out of danger, and he could go no farther.

Now we had no more left to give him, but began to perceive, that what we had parted withal to him, was but flung away; and although we might have taken all from him again being alone in the wood, yet we feared to do it, lest thereby we might exasperate him, and so he might give notice of us to the people, but bade him farewell, after he had conducted us about four or five miles. And we kept on our journey down the river as before, until it was night, and lodged upon a bank under a tree: but were in the way of the elephants; for in the night they came and had like to have disturbed us, so that for our preservation we were forced to fling fire-brands at them to scare them away.

The next morning being Saturday as soon as it was light, having eaten to strengthen us, as horses

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do oats before they travel, we set forth going still down the river; the sand was dry and loose, and so very tedious to go upon: by the side we could not go, being all overgrown with bushes. The land hereabouts was as smooth as a bowling green, but the grass clean burnt up for want of rain.

Having travelled about two hours, we saw a man walking in the river before us, whom we would gladly have shunned, but well could not, for he walked down the river as we did, but at a very slow rate, which much hindered us. But we considering upon the distance we had come, since we left the Brahmin, and comparing it with what he told us, we concluded we were in the Hollanders' jurisdiction: and so amended our pace to overtake the man before us. Whom we perceiving to be free from timorousness at the sight of us, concluded he had used to see white men. Whereupon we asked him, to whom he belonged. He speaking the Sinhalese language answered, 'To the Dutch'; and also that all the country was under their command, and that we were out of all danger, and that the fort of Arippu was but some six miles off, which did not a little rejoice us. We told him, we were of that nation, and had made our escape from Kandy, where we had been many years kept in captivity; and having nothing to give him ourselves, we told him, that it was not to be doubted, but the Chief Commander at the fort would bountifully reward him, if he could go with us and direct us thither. But whether he doubted of that or no, or whether he expected something in hand, he excused himself, pretending earnest and urgent occasions that he could not defer: but advised us to leave the river,

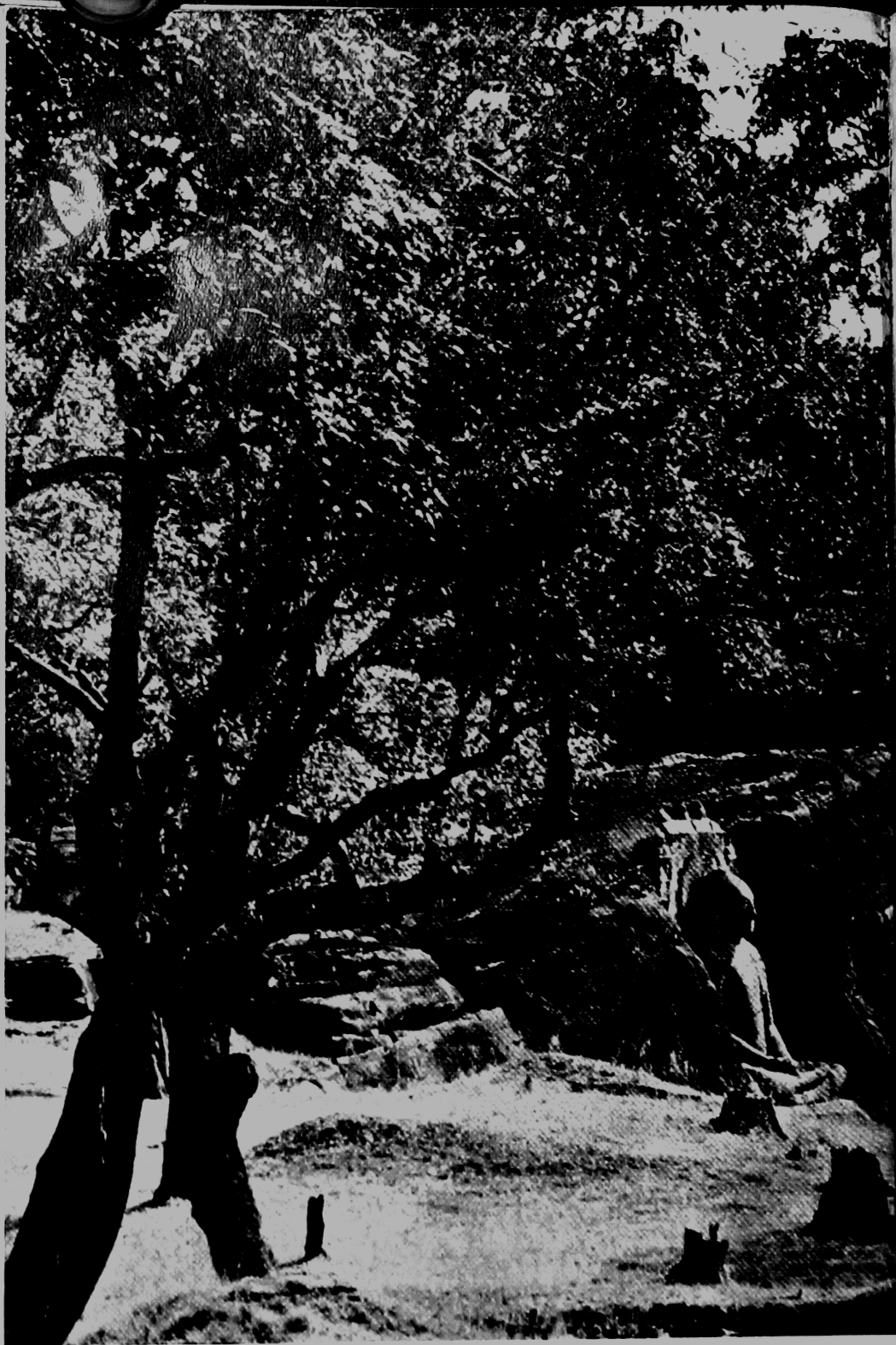
THE REPROACH OF KANDY ROLLED AWAY

because it winds so much about, and turn up without fear to the towns, where the people would direct us the way to the fort.

Upon his advice we struck up a path that came down to the river, intending to go to a town, but could find none; and there were so many cross paths that we could not tell which way to go: and the land here so exceedingly low and level, that we could see no other thing but trees. For although I got up a tree to look if I could see the Dutch fort or discern any houses, yet I could not; and the sun being right over our heads neither could that direct us: insomuch that we wished ourselves again in our old friend, the river. So after so much wandering up and down we sat down under a tree waiting until the sun was fallen, or some people came by. Which not long after three or four Malabars did. One of which could speak a little Portuguese. We told these men, we were Hollanders, supposing they would be the more willing to go with us, but they proved of the same temper with the rest before mentioned. For until I gave one of them a small knife to cut betel-nuts, he would not go with us: but for the lucre¹ of that he conducted us to a town. From whence they sent a man with us to the next, and so we were passed from town to town, until we arrived at the fort called Arippe: it being about four of the clock on Saturday afternoon, October the eighteenth MDCLXXIX. Which day God grant us grace that we may never forget, when he was pleased to give us so great a deliverance from such a long captivity, of nineteen years, and six months, and odd days, being taken prisoner when I was nineteen

¹ profit.

[illegible]



'IMAGES TO THE HONOUR OF THEIR GODS'

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years old, and continued upon the mountains among the heathen till I attained to eight-and-thirty.

The Hollanders much wondered at our arrival, it being so strange that any should escape from Kandy; and entertained us very kindly that night: and the next morning being Sunday, sent a corporal with us to Manaar, and a man to carry our few things.

At Manaar we were brought before the captain of the castle, the Chief Governor being absent. Who when we came in was just risen from dinner; he received us with a great deal of kindness and bade us sit down to eat. It seemed not a little strange to us, who had dwelt so long in straw cottages among the heathen, and used to sit on the ground and eat our meat on leaves, now to sit on chairs and eat out of china dishes at a table. Where were great varieties, and a fair and sumptuous house inhabited by Christian people; we being then in such habit and guise, our natural colour excepted, that we seemed not fit to eat with his servants, no nor his slaves.

After dinner the captain inquired concerning the affairs of the King and country, and the condition of their Ambassadors and people there. To all which we gave them true and satisfactory answers. Then he told us, that tomorrow there was a sloop to sail to Jaffna, in which he would send us to the Commander or Governor, from whence we might have passage to Fort St George, or any other place on that coast, according to our desire. After this, he gave us some money, bidding us go to the castle, to drink and be merry with our countrymen there. For all which kindness giving him many thanks

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in the Portuguese language, we took our leaves of him.

Thus we remained some ten days; at which time the expected Commander arrived, and was received with great ceremonies of state. The next day we went before him to receive his orders concerning us. Which were, to be ready to go with him on the morrow to Colombo, there being a ship that had long waited in that road to carry him. In which we embarked with him for Colombo. At our coming on board to go to sea, we could not expect but to be seasick, being now as fresh men, having so long disused the sea, but it proved otherwise, and we were not in the least stirred.

Being arrived safely at Colombo, before the ship came to an anchor, there came a barge on board to carry the Commander ashore. But being late in the evening, and my consort sick of an ague and fever, we thought it better for us to stay until morning, to have a day before us. The next morning we bid the skipper farewell, and went ashore in the first boat, going straight to the court of guard: where all the soldiers came staring upon us, wondering to see white men in Sinhalese habit. We asked them if there were no Englishmen among them; they told us, there were none, but that in the city there were several. A trumpeter being hard by, who had formerly sailed in English ships, hearing of us came and invited us to his chamber, and entertained my consort being sick of his ague, in his own bed.

This strange news of our arrival from Kandy, was presently spread all about the city, and all the Englishmen that were there immediately came to bid us welcome out of our long captivity. With

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whom we consulted how to come to speech of the Governor. Upon which one of them went and acquainted the captain of the guard of our being on shore. Which the captain understanding went and informed the Governor thereof. Who sent us answer that tomorrow we should come before him.

After my consort's fit was over, our countrymen and their friends invited us abroad, to walk and see the city. We being barefoot and in the Sinhalese habit, with great long beards, the people much wondered at us, and came flocking to see who and what we were; so that we had a great train of people about us as we walked in the streets. After we had walked to and fro, and had seen the city, they carried us to their landladies' house, where we were kindly treated both with victuals and drink; and returned to the trumpeter's chamber, as he had desired us. In the evening came a boy from the Governor's house to tell us, that the Governor invited us to come to supper at his house. But we having dined late with our countrymen and their friends, had no room to receive the Governor's kindness: and so lodged that night at the trumpeter's.

The next morning the Governor, whose name was Ricklof Van Gons, son of Ricklof Van Gons, General of Batavia, sent for us to his house. Whom we found standing in a large and stately room, paved with black and white stones; and only the Commander, who brought us from Manaar, standing by him: who was to succeed him in the government of that place. On the farther side of the room stood three of the chief captains bareheaded. First, he bid us welcome out of our long captivity, and told us, that we were free men, and that he should

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have been glad if he could have been an instrument to redeem us sooner, having endeavoured as much for us as for his own people. For all which we thanked him heartily, telling him, we knew it to be true.

The Governor perceiving I could speak the Portuguese tongue, began to inquire concerning the affairs of the King and country very particularly, and oftentimes asked about such matters as he himself knew better than I. To all his questions my too much experience enabled me to give a satisfactory reply.

During my being here, I wrote a letter to my fellow prisoners I left behind me in Kandy. Wherein I described at large the way we went, so that they might plainly understand the same. Which I finding to be safe and secure, advised them, when God permitted, to steer the same course. This letter I left with the new Governor, and desired him when opportunity presented, to send it to them. Who said he would have it copied out into Dutch for the benefit of their prisoners there, and promised to send both together.

Some two-and-twenty days after our arrival at Colombo, the Governor went on board ship to sail to Batavia, and took us with him. At which time there were many scores of ordnance fired. We sailed all the way with flag and pennant under it, being out both day and night, in a ship of about eight hundred tons burden; and a soldier standing armed sentinel at the cabin door both night and day. He so far favoured me, that I was in his own mess, and ate at his table. Where every meal we had ten or twelve dishes of meat with variety of wine. We set sail from Colombo the four-and-twentieth of

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November, and the fifth of January anchored in Batavia Road.

As we came to greater men so we found greater kindness; for the General of Batavia's reception of us, and favours to us exceeded (if possible) those of the Governor his son. As soon as we came before him, seeming to be very glad, he took me by the hand and bade us heartily welcome, thanking God on our behalf that had appeared so miraculously in our deliverance; telling us withal, that he had omitted no means for our redemption, and that if it had laid in his power, we should long before have had our liberty. I humbly thanked His Excellency, and said, that I knew it to be true; and that though it missed of an effect, yet his good will was not the less, neither were our obligations, being ever bound to thank and pray for him.

Then his own tailor was ordered to take measure of us, and furnish us with two suits of apparel. He gave us also money for tobacco and betel, and to spend in the city. All the time we stayed there, our quarters were in the captain of the castle's house. And oftentimes the General would send for me to his own table, at which sat only himself and lady; who was all bespangled with diamonds and pearls. Sometimes his sons and daughters-in-law, with some other strangers did eat with him; the trumpet sounding all the while. We finding ourselves thus kindly entertained, and our habits changed, saw that we were no more captives in Kandy, nor yet prisoners elsewhere; therefore cut off our beards which we had brought with us out of our captivity: for until then we cut them not; God having rolled away the reproach of Kandy from us.

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At this time came two English merchants hither from Bantam, with whom the general was pleased to permit us to go. But when we came to Bantam, the English agent very kindly entertained us, and being not willing, that we should go to the Dutch for passage, since God had brought us to our own nation, ordered our passage in the good ship *Caesar* lying then in the road, bound for England, the land of our nativity, and our long-wished-for port. Where by the good providence of God we arrived safe in the month of September.

PART II

CHAPTER IX

THE INLAND COUNTRY AND ITS CITIES

It is the inland country I chiefly intend to write of, which is yet a hidden land even to the Dutch themselves that inhabit upon the island. The land is full of hills, but exceedingly well watered, there being many pure and clear rivers running through them. Which falling down about their lands is a very great benefit for the country in respect of their rice, their chief sustenance. These rivers are generally very rocky, and so unnavigable. In them are great quantities of fish, and the greater for want of skill in the people to catch them. The main river of all is called Mahaveli Ganga; which proceeds out of the mountain called Adam's Peak (of which afterwards): it runs through the whole land northward, and falls into the sea at Trincomalee. It may be an arrow's flight over in breadth, but not navigable by reason of the many rocks and great falls in it: towards the sea it is full of alligators, but on the mountains none at all.

It is so deep that unless it be mighty dry weather, a man cannot wade over it, unless towards the head of it. They use little canoes to pass over it: but there are no bridges built over it, being so very broad, and the stream in time of rains (which in this country are very great) runs so high, that they

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cannot make them, neither if they could, would it be permitted; for the King cares not to make his country easy to travel, but desires to keep it intricate. This river runs within a mile or less of the city of Kandy. In some places of it, full of rocks, in others clear for three or four miles.

The land is generally covered with woods, excepting the kingdom of Uva, and the counties of Uda Palata, and Dolosbage, which are naturally somewhat clear of them.

It is most populous about the middle, least near about by the sea; how it is with those parts under the Hollanders, I know not. The northern parts are somewhat sickly by reason of bad water, the rest very healthful.

The valleys between their hills are many of them quagmires, and most of them full of brave¹ springs of pure water: which watery valleys are the best sort of land for their corn, as requiring much moisture, as shall be told in its place.

On the south side^{*} of Kandy is a hill, supposed to be the highest on this island, called in the Sinhalese language, Samanala Kanda; but by the Portuguese and the European nations, Adam's Peak. It is sharp like a sugar-loaf, and on the top a flat stone with the print of a foot like a man's on it, but far bigger, being about two feet long. The people of this land count it meritorious to go and worship this impression; and generally about their New Year, which is in March, they, men, women and children, go up this vast and high mountain to worship. The manner of which I shall write hereafter, when I come to describe their religion. Out of this

¹ fine, excellent.

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mountain arise many fine rivers, which run through the land, some to the westward, some to the southward, and the main river, viz. Mahaveli Ganga before mentioned, to the northward.

This kingdom of Kandy is strongly fortified by nature. For which way soever you enter into it, you must ascend vast and high mountains, and descend little or nothing. The ways are many, but very narrow, so that but one can go abreast. The hills are covered with wood and great rocks, so that 'tis scarce possible to get up anywhere, but only in the paths, in all which there are gates made of thorns, the one at the bottom, the other at the top of the hills, and two or three men always set to watch, who are to examine all that come and go, and see what they carry, that letters may not be conveyed, nor prisoners or other slaves run away. These watches, in case of opposition, are to call out to the towns near, who are to assist them. They oftentimes have no arms, for they are the people of the near-by towns: but their weapons to stop people are to charge them in the King's name; which disobeyed, is so severely punished, that none dare resist. These watches are but as sentinels to give notice; for in case of war and danger the King sends commanders and soldiers to lie here.

The one part of this island differs very much from the other, both in respect of the seasons and the soil. For when the westwardly winds blow, then it rains on the west side of the island: and that is the season for them to till their grounds. And at the same time on the east side is very fair and dry weather and the time of their harvest. On the contrary, when the east winds blow, it is tilling time for those that

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inhabit the east parts, and harvest to those on the west. So that harvest is here in one part or other all the year long. These rains and this dry weather do part themselves about the middle of the land; as oftentimes I have seen, being on the one side of a mountain called Karagas Hena, rainy and wet weather, and as soon as I came on the other, dry, and so exceedingly hot, that I could scarcely walk on the ground, being, as the manner there is, barefoot.

It rains far more in the highlands of Kandy, than in the lowlands beneath the hills. The north end of this island is much subject to dry weather. I have known it for five or six years together so dry (having no rains, and there is no other means of water but that, being but three springs of running water, that I know, or ever heard of), that they could not plough nor sow, and scarcely could dig wells deep enough to get water to drink, and when they got it, its taste was brackish. At which time in other parts there wanted not rain; whither the northern people were forced to come to buy food.

In this island are several places, where, they say, formerly stood cities; and still retain the name, though little or nothing of building be now to be seen. But yet there are five cities now standing, which are the most eminent, and where the King has palaces and goods; yet even these, all of them, except that wherein his person is, are ruined and fallen to decay.

The first is the city of Kandy, so generally called by the Christians, which in the Sinhalese language signifies hills, for among them it is situated, but by the inhabitants called Senkadagala Nuvara, as

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much as to say, the city of the Sinhalese people, and Maha Nuvara, signifying the chief or royal city. This is the chief or metropolitan city of the whole island. It is placed in the midst of the island in Yatinuvara, bravely situate for all conveniences, excellently well watered. The King's palace stands on the east corner of the city, as is customary in this land for the King's palaces to stand. This city is three-square like a triangle: but no artificial strength about it, unless on the south side, which is the easiest and openest way to it, they have long since cast up a bank of earth across the valley from one hill to the other; which nevertheless is not so steep but that a man may easily go over it anywhere. It may be some twenty feet in height. In every way to come to this city about two or three miles off from it are thorn-gates and watches to examine all that go and come: it is environed round with hills. The great river coming down from Adam's Peak runs within less than a mile of it on the west side. It has oftentimes been burnt by the Portuguese in their former invasions of this island, together with the King's palace and the temples. Insomuch that the King has been fain to pay them a tribute of three elephants per annum. The King left this city about twenty years ago, and never since has come at it. So that it is now quite gone to decay.

A second city is Nilambe Nuvara, lying in Uda Palata, south of Kandy, some twelve miles distance. Unto this the King retired, and here kept his court, when he forsook Kandy.

Thirdly, the city Alutnuvara on the north-east of Kandy. Here this King was born, here also he keeps great store of corn and salt, etc., against time

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of war or trouble. This is situate in the country of Bintenne, which land, I have never been at, but have taken a view of from the top of a mountain. It seems to be smooth land, and not much hilly; the great river runs through the midst of it. It is all over covered with mighty woods and abundance of deer, but much subject to dry weather and sickness. In these woods is a sort of wild people inhabiting, whom we shall speak of in their place.

Fourthly, Badulla, eastward from Kandy some two days' journey, the second city in this land. The Portuguese in time of war burnt it down to the ground. The palace here is quite ruined; the pagodas¹ only remain in good repair.

This city stands in the kingdom or province of Uva, which is a country well watered, the land not smooth, neither the hills very high, wood very scarce, but what they plant about their houses. But great plenty of cattle, their land void of wood being the more apt for grazing. If these cattle be carried to any other parts in this island they will commonly die, the reason whereof no man can tell, only they conjecture it is occasioned by a kind of small tree or shrub, that grows in all countries but in Uva, the touch or scent of which may be poison to the Uva cattle though it is not so to other. The tree has a pretty physical smell like an apothecary's shop, but no sort of cattle will eat it. In this country grows the best tobacco that is on this land. Rice is more plentiful here than most other things.

The fifth city is Diyatilaka Nuvara towards the east of Kandy, lying in the country of Hevaheta. Where the King ever since he was routed from

¹ temples.

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Nilambe Nuvara in the rebellion anno 1664 has held his court. The situation of this place is very rocky and mountainous, the lands barren; so that hardly a worse place could be found out in the whole island. Yet the King chose it, partly because it lies about the middle of his kingdom, but chiefly for his safety; having the great mountain Galauda behind his palace, unto which he fled for safety in the rebellion, being not only high, but on the top of it lie three towns, and cornfields, whence he may have necessary supplies: and it is so fenced with steep cliffs, rocks and woods, that a few men here will be able to defend themselves against a great army.

There are besides these already mentioned, several other ruinous places that do still retain the name of cities, where kings have reigned, though now little footsteps remaining of them. At the north end of this King's dominions is one of these ruinous cities, called Anuradhapura where they say ninety kings have reigned, the spirits of whom they hold now to be saints in glory, having merited it by making pagodas and stone pillars and images to the honour of their gods, whereof there are many yet remaining: which the Sinhalese count very meritorious to worship, and the next¹ way to Heaven. Nearby is a river, by which we came when we made our escape: all along which is abundance of hewed stones, some long for pillars, some broad for paving. Over this river there have been three stone bridges built upon stone pillars, but now are fallen down; and the country all desolate without inhabitants. At this city of Anuradhapura is a watch kept, beyond

¹ nearest.

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which are no more people that yield obedience to the King of Kandy. This place is above ninety miles to the northward of the city of Kandy. In these northern parts there are no hills, nor but two or three springs of running water, so that their corn ripens with the help of rain.

There is a port in the country of Puttalam lying on the west side of this island, whence part of the King's country is supplied with salt and fish: where they have some small trade with the Dutch, who have a fort upon the point, to prevent boats from coming: but the eastern parts being too far, and hilly, to drive cattle thither for salt, God's providence has provided them a place on the east side nearer them, which in their language they call Levaya. Where the eastwardly winds blowing, the sea beats in, and in westwardly winds (being then fair weather there) it becomes salt, and that in such abundance, that they have as much as they please to fetch. This place of Levaya is so contrived by the providence of the Almighty Creator, that neither the Portuguese nor Dutch in all the time of their wars could ever prevent this people from having the benefit of this salt, which is the principal thing that they esteem in time of trouble or war; and most of them do keep by them a store of salt against such times. It is, as I have heard, environed with hills on the land side, and by sea not convenient for ships to ride; and very sickly, which they do impute to the power of a great God, who dwells near by in a town they call Kataragama, standing in the road, to whom all that go to fetch salt both small and great must give an offering. The name and power of this God strikes such terror into the Sinhalese, that those

THE FIELDS

who otherwise are enemies to this King, and have served both Portuguese and Dutch against him, yet would never assist either to make invasions this way.

Having said thus much concerning the cities and other eminent places of this kingdom, I will now add a little concerning their towns. The best are those that do belong to their idols, wherein stand their *dewals* or temples. They do not care to make streets by building their houses together in rows, but each man lives by himself in his own plantation, having a hedge it may be and a ditch round about him to keep out cattle. Their towns are always placed some distance from the highways, for they care not that their towns should be a thoroughfare for all people, but only for those that have business with them. They are not very big, in some may be forty, in some fifty houses, and in some above a hundred, and in some again not above eight or ten.

CHAPTER X

THE FIELDS

THEY have divers sorts of corn, though all different from ours. And here I shall first speak of their rice, the choice and flower of all their corn, and then concerning the other inferior kinds among them.

Of rice they have several sorts, and called by several names according to the different times of their ripening: however in taste little disagreeing from one another. Some will require seven months before it come to maturity, called *mauvi*; some six, *hauteal*; others will ripen in five, *honorowal*; others

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in four, *benit*; and others in three, *aufancol*.¹ The price of all these is one and the same. That which is soonest ripe, is most savoury to the taste; but yields the least increase. It may be asked then, why any other sort of rice is sown, but that which is longest a-ripening, seeing it brings in most profit? In answer to this, you must know, that all these sorts of rice do absolutely require water to grow in, all the while they stand; so that the inhabitants take great pains in procuring and saving water for their grounds, and in making conveyances of water from their rivers and ponds into their lands, which they are very ingenious in; also in levelling their corn lands, which must be as smooth as a bowling-green, that the water may cover all over. Neither are their steep and hilly lands incapable of being thus overflowed with water. For the doing of which they use this art. They level these hills into narrow alleys, some three, some eight feet wide one beneath another, according to the steepness of the hills, working and digging them in that fashion that they lie smooth and flat, like so many stairs up the hills one above another. The waters at the top of the hills falling downwards are let into these alleys, and so successively by running out of one into another, water all; first the higher lands, and then the lower. The highest alleys having such a quantity of water as may suffice to cover them, the rest runs over unto the next, and that having its proportion, unto the next, and so by degrees it falls into all these hanging parcels² of ground. These

¹ D. W. Ferguson puts these names for the different sorts of grain in modern Sinhalese as follows: *māvi*, *hātīli*, *honara vāla*, *hīnaṭi*, *hālpan kaḷu*. *J.R.A.S.(C.B.)*, XIV, No. 47.

² parts.

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waters last sometimes a longer, and sometimes a shorter season. Now the rice they sow is according as they foresee their stock of water will last. It will sometimes last them two or three, or four or five months, more or less; the rice therefore they chose to cast into the ground, is of that sort that may answer the duration of the water. For all their crop would be spoilt if the water should fail them before their corn grew ripe. If they foresee their water will hold out long, then they sow the best and most profitable rice, viz. that which is the longest a-ripening; but if it will not, they must be content to sow the worser sorts; that is, those that are sooner ripe. Again, they are forced sometimes to sow this younger rice, for the preventing the damage it might otherwise meet with, if it should stand longer. For their fields are all in common, which after they have sown, they enclose till harvest; but as soon as the corn first sown becomes ripe, when the owner has reaped it, it is lawful for him to break down his fences and let in his cattle for grazing; which would prove a great mischief to that corn that required to stand a month or two longer. Therefore if they are constrained to sow later than the rest, either through want or sloth, or some other impediment, yet they make use of that kind of rice that will become ripe, equal with that first sown. And so they all observe one time of reaping to prevent their corn being trampled down or eaten up by the cattle. Thus they time their corn to their harvest; some sowing sooner, some later, but all reaping together, unless they be fields that are enclosed by themselves; and peculiar to¹ one man.

¹ the private property of.

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At reaping they are excellent good, just after the English manner. The whole town, as they join together in tilling, so in their harvest also: for all fall in together in reaping one man's field, and so to the next, until every man's corn be down. And the custom is, that every man, during the reaping of his corn, finds all the rest with victuals. The women's work is to gather up the corn after the reapers and carry it all together.

They use not threshing, but tread out their corn with cattle, which is a far quicker and easier way. They may tread out in a day forty or fifty bushels at least with the help of half a dozen cattle.

There are divers other sorts of corn, which serve the people for food in the absence of rice, which will scarcely hold out with many of them above half the year. There is *coracan*, which is a small seed like mustard-seed. This they grind to meal or beat in a mortar, and so make cakes of it, baking it upon the coals in a potsherd, or dress it otherwise. If they which are not used to it, eat it, it will gripe their bellies. When they are minded to grind it, they have for their mill two round stones, which they turn with their hands by the help of a stick. There are several sorts of this corn. Some will ripen in three months, and some require four. If the ground be good, it yields a great increase; and grows both on the hills and in the plains. There is another corn called *tanna*;¹ it is much eaten in the northern parts, in Kandy but little sown. It is as small as the former, but yields a far greater increase, from one grain may spring up two, three, four or five stalks, according as the ground is, on each stalk one ear,

¹ *tana*, millet.

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that contains thousands of grains. I think it gives the greatest increase of any one seed in the world. Each husbandman sows not above one pottle¹ at seed-time. It grows up two feet or two feet and a half from the ground. The way of gathering it when ripe, is, that the women (whose office it is) go and crop off the ears with their hands, and bring them home in baskets. They only take off the ears of *coracan* also, but they being tough, are cut off with knives. This *tanna* must be parched in a pan, and then is beaten in a mortar to unhusk it. It will boil like rice, but swell far more; the taste not bad but very dry, and accounted wholesome; the fashion flattish, the colour yellow and very lovely to the eye. It ripens in four months, some sorts of it in three. There are also divers other sorts, which grow on dry land (as the former) and ripen with the rain. As *moung*,² a corn somewhat like vetches, growing in a cod. *Omb*,³ a small seed, boiled and eaten as rice. It has an operation pretty strange, which is, that when it is new it will make them that eat it like drunk, sick and spew; and this only when it is sown in some grounds, for in all it will not have this effect: and being old, none will have it. *Minere*,³ a small seed. *Boumas*,⁴ we call them garavances. *Tolla*,⁵ a seed used to make oil, with which they annoint themselves; and sometimes they will parch it and eat it with jaggery, a kind of brown sugar. And thus much of their corn.

¹ bundle (a measure).

² *mum*, green gram, a climbing, leguminous plant.

³ *amu* and *meneri*, according to Ferguson (ibid.).

⁴ *buma*, according to Ferguson (ibid.). Garavances would be 'pulses' in present-day English.

⁵ *tala*, sesamum.

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OF fruits here are great plenty and variety, and far more might be if they did esteem or nourish them. Pleasant fruits to eat ripe they care not at all to do, they look only after those that may fill the belly and satisfy their hunger when their corn is spent, or to make it go the further. These only they plant, the other fruits of pleasure plant themselves, the seeds of the ripe fruits shedding and falling on the ground naturally spring up again. They have all fruits that grow in India. Most sorts of these delicious fruits they gather before they be ripe, and boil them to make curries, to use the Portuguese word,¹ that is to eat with and relish their rice. But wheresoever there is any fruit better than ordinary, the *Ponudecars* or officers of the country, will tie a string about the tree in the King's name with three knots on the end thereof, and then no man, not the owner himself, dares presume under pain of some great punishment, if not death, to touch them. And when they are ripe, they are wrapped in white cloth, and carried to him who is Governor of that country wherein they grow: and if they be without any defect or blemish, then being wrapped up again in white cloth, he presents them to the King. But

¹ It is actually a Dravidian word (Tamil and Kannada) which the Portuguese borrowed.

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the owner in whose ground they grow is paid nothing at all for them: it is well if he be not compelled to carry them himself into the bargain unto the King, be it never so far. These are reasons why the people regard not to plant more than just to keep them alive.

But to specify some of the chief of the fruits in request among them. I begin with their betelnuts, the trees that bear them grow only on the south and west sides of this island. They do not grow wild, they are only in their towns, and there like unto woods, without any enclosures to distinguish one man's trees from another's; but by marks of great trees, hummocks or rocks each man knows his own. They plant them not, but the nuts being ripe fall down in the grass and so grow up to trees. They are very straight and tall, few bigger than the calf of a man's leg. The nuts grow in bunches at the top, and being ripe look red and very lovely like a pleasing fruit.

Money is not very plentiful in this land, but by means of these nuts, which is a great commodity to carry to the coasts of Coromandel they furnish themselves with all things they want. The common price of nuts, when there was a trade, as there was when I came first on this land, is 20,000 for one dollar; but now they lie and grow, or rot on the ground under the trees.

There is another fruit, which we call jacks: the inhabitants when they are young call them *polos*, before they be full ripe *cose*; and when ripe, *warracha* or *vellas*; but with this difference, the *warracha* is hard, but the *vellas* as soft as pap,¹ both looking

¹ mash.

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alike, to the eye no difference; but they are distinct trees. These are a great help to the people and a great part of their food. They grow upon a large tree, the fruit is as big as a good peck loaf,¹ the outside prickly like a hedgehog, and of a greenish colour; there are in them seeds or kernels, or eggs as the Sinhalese call them, which lie dispersed in the fruit like seeds in a cucumber. They usually gather them before they be full ripe, boring a hole in them, and feeling of the kernel, they know if they be ripe enough for their purpose. Then being cut in pieces they boil them, and eat to save rice and fill their bellies; they eat them as we would do turnips or cabbage, and taste and smell much like the latter: one may suffice six or seven men. When they are ripe they are sweet and good to eat raw. The kernels do very much resemble chestnuts both in colour and taste and are almost as good: the poor people will boil them or roast them in the embers, there being usually a good heap of them lying in a corner by the fireside; and when they go a journey, they will put them in a bag for their provisions by the way. One jack may contain three pints or two quarts of these seeds or kernels. When they cut these jacks, there comes running out a white thick substance like tar, and will stick just like birdlime, which the boys make use of to catch birds, which they call *cola*,² or blood of the *cos*. Some will mix this with the flour of rice and it will eat like eggs.

Another fruit there is which I never saw in any other parts of India, they call it *jombo*.³ In taste

¹ a large loaf; a peck being a quarter of a bushel.

² Ferguson points out to us that Knox wrongly derives the second syllable of this word from the Sinhalese *lā* = blood.

³ roseapple.

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it is like to an apple, full of juice, and pleasant to the palate, and not unwholesome to the body, and to the eye no fruit more amiable, being white, and delicately coloured with red, as if it were painted.

There are three other trees that must not here be omitted; which though they bear no eatable fruit, yet the leaves of the one, and the juice of the other, and the bark of the third are very renowned, and of great benefit.

The first is the tallipot; it is as big and tall as a ship's mast, and very straight, bearing only leaves: which are of great use and benefit to this people; one single leaf being so broad and large, that it will cover some fifteen or twenty men, and keep them dry when it rains. The leaf being dried is very strong, and limber, and most wonderfully made for men's convenience to carry along with them; for though this leaf be thus broad when it is open, yet it will fold close like a lady's fan, and then it is no bigger than a man's arm. It is wonderful light, they cut them into pieces, and carry them in their hands. The whole leaf spread is round almost like a circle, but being cut in pieces for use are near like unto a triangle: they lay them upon their heads as they travel with the peaked end foremost, which is convenient to make their way through the boughs and thickets. When the sun is vehement hot they use them to shade themselves from the heat. Soldiers all carry them; for besides the benefit of keeping them dry in case it rain upon the march, these leaves make their tents to lie under in the night. A marvellous mercy which Almighty God has bestowed upon this poor and naked people in this rainy country!

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The next tree is the *kettule*. It grows straight, but not so tall or big as a coconut tree; the inside nothing but a white pith, as the former. It yields a sort of liquor, which they call *tellegie*:¹ it is rarely² sweet and pleasing to the palate and as wholesome to the body, but no stronger than water. They take it down from the tree twice, and from some good trees thrice, in a day. An ordinary tree will yield some three, some four gallons in a day, some more and some less. The which liquor they boil and make a kind of brown sugar, called jaggery; but if they will use their skill, they can make it as white as the second-best sugar: and for any use it is but little inferior to ordinary sugar. The manner how they take this liquor from the tree is thus; when the tree is come to maturity, first out of the very top there cometh out a bud, which if they let it grow, will bear a round fruit, which is the seed it yields, but is only good to set for increase. This bud they cut and prepare, by putting to it several sorts of things, as salt, pepper, lemons, garlic, leaves, etc., which keeps it at a stand and suffers it not to ripen. So they daily cut off a thin slice of the end, and the liquor drops in a pot, which they hang to catch it.

I proceed to the third tree, which is the cinnamon, in their language *corunda-gaba*. It grows wild in the woods as other trees, and by them no more esteemed; it is most on the west side of the great river Mahaveli Ganga. The trees are not very great, but sizable. The cinnamon is the bark or rind; when it is on the tree it looks whitish. When the young leaves come out they look purely red like

¹ Sinhalese *telijja* = sweet toddy.

² exceptionally.

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scarlet: break or bruise them, and they will smell more like cloves than cinnamon. It bears a fruit, which is ripe in September, much like an acorn, but smaller, it neither tastes nor smells much like the bark, but being boiled in water it will yield an oil swimming on the top, which when cold is as hard as tallow and as white; and smells excellently well. They use it for ointments for aches and pains, and to burn in lamps to give light in their houses: but they make no candles of it, neither are any candles used by any but the King.

I shall mention but one tree more as famous and highly set by as any of the rest, if not more, though it bear no fruit, the benefit consisting chiefly in the holiness of it. This tree they call *bogaha*: we, the God-tree. It is very great and spreading, the leaves always shake like an asp.¹ They have a very great veneration for these trees, worshipping them; upon a tradition, that the Buddha, when he was upon the earth, did use to sit under this kind of trees. There are many of these trees, which they plant all the land over, and have more care of, than any other. They pave round under them like a key,² sweep often under them to keep them clean; they light lamps, and set up their images under them: and a stone table is placed under some of them to lay their sacrifices on. They set them everywhere in towns and highways, where any convenient places are: they serve also for shade to travellers. They will also set them in memorial of persons deceased, to wit, there, where their bodies

¹ aspen tree.

² The circular shape of the paving with the path for devotees would resemble a key.

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were burnt. It is held meritorious to plant them, which, they say, he that does, shall die within a short while after, and go to Heaven: but the oldest men only that are nearest death in the course of nature do plant them, and none else; the younger sort desiring to live a little longer in this world before they go to the other.

They have several other sorts of fruits which they dress and eat with their rice, and taste very savoury, called *carowela*, *wattacul*, *morongo*, *cacorehouns*,¹ etc., the which I cannot compare to any things that grow here in England.

They have of our English herbs and plants, colworts,² carrots, radishes, fennel, balsam, spearmint, mustard. These, excepting the two last, are not the natural produce of the land, but they are transplanted hither; by which I perceive all other European plants would grow there: they have also fern, Indian corn. Several sorts of beans as good as these in England: right³ cucumbers, calabashes, and several sorts of pumpkins, etc. The Dutch on the island in their gardens have lettuce, rosemary, sage, and all other herbs and sallettings⁴ that we have in these countries.

Nor are they worse supplied with medicinal herbs. The woods are their apothecaries' shops, where with herbs, leaves, and the rinds of trees they make all their physic and plasters, with which sometimes they will do notable cures. I will not here enter into a larger discourse of the medicinal virtues of their plants, etc., of which there are hundreds:

¹ These would be (see Ferguson) *karivila*, *wātakolu*, *murumgā*. It is difficult to say what Knox's *cacorehouns* translates.

² cabbages.

³ good.

⁴ herbs and vegetables used for salads.

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only as a specimen thereof, and likewise of their skill to use them, I will relate a passage or two. A neighbour of mine, a Sinhalese, would undertake to cure a broken leg or arm by application of some herbs that grow in the woods, and that with that speed, that the broken bone after it was set should knit by the time one might boil a pot of rice and three curries, that is about an hour-and-a-half or two hours; and I knew a man who told me he was thus cured. They will cure an imposthume¹ in the throat with the rind of a tree called *amaranga*² (whereof I myself had the experience), by chewing it for a day or two after it is prepared, and swallowing the spittle. I was well in a day and a night, though before I was exceedingly ill, and could not swallow my victuals.

There is another white flower like our jasmine, well scented, they call them *pich-mauls*,³ which the King has a parcel of brought to him every morning, wrapped in a white cloth, hanging upon a staff, and carried by people, whose peculiar office this is. All people that meet these flowers, out of respect for the King, for whose use they are, must turn out of the way; and so they must for all other things that go to the King being wrapped up in white cloth. These officers hold land of the King for this service: their office is, also to plant these flowers, which they usually do near the rivers where they most delight to grow: nay, they have power to plant them in any man's ground, and enclose that ground when they have done it for the sole use of their flowers to grow in: which enclosures they will keep up for

¹ abscess.

² Sinhalese *kāmaranga*.

³ Sinhalese *piccha mal*.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR several years, until the ground becomes so worn, that the flowers will thrive there no longer, and then the owners resume their own lands again.

CHAPTER XII

THE CREATURES THAT THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR

THEY have cows, buffaloes, hogs, goats, deer, hares, dogs, jackals, apes, tigers,¹ bears, elephants, and other wild beasts. Lions, wolves, horses, asses, sheep, they have none. Deer are in great abundance in the woods, and of several sorts, from the largeness of a cow or buffalo, to the smallness of a hare.

The King has an elephant spotted or speckled all the body over, which was lately caught; and though he has many and very stately elephants, and may have as many more as he pleases, yet he prefers this before them all. And since I am fallen upon discourse of the elephant, the creature that this country is famed for above any in India, I will detain myself a little longer upon it.

I will first relate the manner of taking them, and afterwards their sagacity, with other things that occur to my memory concerning them. This beast, though he be so big and wise, yet he is easily caught. When the King commands to catch elephants, after they have found them they like, that is such as have teeth;² for though there be many in the woods, yet but few have teeth, and they males only: unto these they drive some she-elephants, which they

¹ Knox means leopards.

² tusks.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR

bring with them for the purpose; which when once the males have got a sight of, they will never leave, but follow them wheresoever they go; and the females are so used to it, that they will do whatsoever either by a word or a beck their keepers bid them; and so they delude them along through towns and country, through the streets of the city, even to the very gates of the King's palace; where sometimes they seize upon them by snares, and sometimes by driving them into a kind of pound,¹ they catch them.

After they have brought the elephant which is not yet caught together with the she, into the King's presence, if it likes him not, he commands to let him go; if it does, he appoints him some certain place near unto the city, where they are to drive him with the females; for without them it is not possible to make him stay; and to keep him in that place until the King's further order and pleasure is to catch him, which perhaps may not be in two or three or four years; all which time there are great men with soldiers appointed to watch there about him: and if he should chance to stray a little out of his bounds set by the King, immediately they bring him back, fearing the King's displeasure, which is no less than death itself.

Here these elephants do, and may do, great damage to the country, by eating up their corn, and trampling it with their broad feet, and throwing down their coconut trees, and oftentimes their houses too, and they may not resist them. It is thought this is done by the King to punish them that lie under his displeasure. And if you ask what becomes of these elephants at last; sometimes after they have

¹ enclosure.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR thus kept watch over them two or three years, and destroyed the country in this manner, the King will send order to carry them into the woods, and let them go free. For he catches them not for any use or benefit he has by them, but only for his recreation and pastime.

As the elephant is the greatest in body, so in understanding also. For he will do anything that his keeper bids him, which is possible for a beast not having hands to do. And as the Sinhalese report, they bear the greatest love to their young of all irrational creatures; for the shes are alike tender of any one young ones as of their own: where there are many she-elephants together, the young ones go and suck of any, as well as of their mothers; and if a young one be in distress and should cry out, they will all in general run to the help and aid thereof; and if they be going over a river, as here be some somewhat broad, and the streams run very swift, they will all with their trunks assist and help to convey the young ones over. They take great delight to lie and tumble in the water, and will swim excellently well. Their teeth they never shed.

Neither will they ever breed tame ones with tame ones; but to ease themselves of the trouble to bring them meet,¹ they will tie their two fore-feet together, and put them into the woods, where meeting with the wild ones, they conceive and go one year with young.

It is their constant practice to shove down with their heads great trees, which they love to eat, when they be too high, and they cannot otherwise reach the boughs. Wild ones will run much faster than a

¹ to bring them together.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR man, but tame ones not. The people stand in fear of them, and oftentimes are killed by them. They do them also great damage in their grounds, by night coming into their fields and eating up their corn and likewise their coconut trees, etc. So that in towns near unto the woods, where are plenty of them, the people are forced to watch their corn all night, and also their orchards and plantations; into which being once entered with eating and trampling they will do much harm, before they can get them out. Who oftentimes when by lighting of torches, and halloing, they will not go out, take their bows and go and shoot them, but not without some hazard, for sometimes the elephant runs upon them and kills them. For fear of which they will not adventure unless there be trees, about which they may dodge to defend themselves. And although there be both bears and tigers in these woods, yet they are not so fierce, as commonly to assault people; travellers and wayfaring men go more in fear of elephants than of any other beasts.

There are ants of several sorts, and some worthy our remark.

First of all, there are the *coumbias*, a sort of small reddish ants like ours in England.

Secondly, the *tale-coumbias*, as small as the former but blackish. These usually live in hollow trees or rotten wood, and will sting most terribly.

Thirdly, the *dimbios*, great red ants. These make their nests upon the boughs of great trees, bringing the leaves together in clusters, it may be as big as a man's head; in which they lay their eggs and breed. There will be oftentimes many nests of these upon one tree, insomuch that the people are afraid to go

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR up to gather the fruits lest they should be stung by them.

A fourth sort of ants are those they call *coura-atcb*.¹ They are great and black, living in the ground. Their daily practice is to bring up dirt out of the ground, making great hollow holes in the earth, somewhat resembling cony burrows;² only these are less, and run straight downwards for some way, and then turn away into divers paths underground. In many places of the land there are so many of these holes, that cattle are ready to break their legs as they go. These do not sting.

A fifth is the *coddia*. This ant is of an excellent bright black, and as large as any of the former. They dwell always in the ground; and their usual practice is, to be travelling in great multitudes, but I do not know where they are going, nor what their business is; but they pass and repass some forwards and some backwards in great haste, seemingly as full of employment as people that pass along the streets. These ants will bite desperately, as bad as if a man were burnt with a coal of fire. But they are of a noble nature: for they will not begin; and you may stand by them, if you do not tread upon them nor disturb them. The reason their bite is thus terribly painful is this; formerly these ants went to ask a wife of the *noya*,³ a venomous and noble kind of snake; and because they had such a high spirit to dare to offer to be related to such a generous creature, they had this virtue bestowed upon them, that they should sting after this manner. And if they had obtained a wife of the *noya*, they

¹ Ferguson (ibid.) suggests Sinhalese *geriyā*?

² rabbit burrows.

³ the cobra.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR should have had the privilege to have stung full as bad as he. This is a current fable among the Sinhalese. Though undoubtedly they chiefly regard the wisdom that is concealed under this, and the rest of their fables.

There is a sixth sort called *vaeos*.¹ These are more numerous than any of the former. All the whole earth does swarm with them. They are of a middle size between the greatest and the least, the hinder part white, and the head red. They eat and devour all that they can come at; as besides food, cloth, wood, thatch of houses and every thing excepting iron and stone. So that the people cannot set any thing upon the ground within their houses for them. They creep up the walls of their houses, and build an arch made of dirt over themselves all the way as they climb, be it never so high. And if this arch or vault chance to be broken, they all, how high soever they were, come back again to mend up the breach, which being finished they proceed forwards again, eating everything they come at in their way. This vermin does exceedingly annoy the Sinhalese, insomuch that they are continually looking upon anything they value, to see if any of these *vaeos* have been at it. Which they may easily perceive by this case of dirt, which they cannot go up anywhere without building as they go. And wheresoever this is seen, no doubt the ants are there.

In places where there are no houses, and they can eat nothing belonging to the people, they will raise great hills like butts, some four or five or six feet high; which are so hard and strong, that it would

¹ termites.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR
be work enough to dig them down with pickaxes.
The Sinhalese call these *humbosses*. Within they are
full of hollow vaults and arches where they dwell
and breed, and their nests are much like to honey-
combs, full of eggs and young ones. These *humbosses*
are built with a pure refined clay by the ingenious
builders. The people use this clay to make their
earthen Gods of, because it is so pure and fine.

Monkeys, of which there are abundance in the
woods, and of divers sorts, some so large as our
English spaniel dogs, of a darkish grey colour, and
black faces, with great white beards round from ear
to ear, which makes them show just like old men.
There is another sort just of the same bigness but
different in colour, being milk white both in body
and face, having great beards like the others; of
this sort of white ones there is not such plenty.
But both these sorts do but little mischief, keeping
in the woods, eating only leaves and buds of trees,
but when they are caught they will eat anything.
This sort they call in their language wanderoos.
There is yet another sort of apes, of which there is
great abundance, who coming with such multitudes
do a great deal of mischief to the corn, that grows
in the woods, so that they are fain all the day long
to keep watch to scare them out: and so soon as
they are gone to fray¹ them away at one end of the
field, others who wait for such an opportunity come
skipping in at the other; and before they can turn,
will fill both bellies and hands full, to carry away
with them; and to stand all round to guard their
field is more than they can do. This sort of monkeys
have no beards, white faces, and long hair on the top

¹ frighten.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR of their heads, which parts and hangs down like a man's. These are so impudent that they will come into their gardens, and eat such fruit as grows there. They call these *rillowes*. The flesh of all these sorts of apes they account good to eat. There are several sorts of squirrels also, which they do eat when they can catch them.

In the next place I will entertain you with some relation of the other living creatures among them. I begin with their birds. In that land there are crows, sparrows, tom-tits, snipe, just like those in England, wood-pigeons also, but not great flocks of any sorts, as we have, only of crows and pigeons. I have seen there birds just like woodcocks and partridges, but they are scarce. A great many wild peacocks: small green parrots, but not very good to talk. But here is another bird in their language called *mal-cowda*, which with teaching will speak excellently well. It is black with yellow gills about the bigness of a blackbird: and another sort there is of the same bigness, called *cau-cowda*, yellow like gold, very beautiful to the eye, which also might be taught to speak.¹

Here are other sorts of small birds, not much bigger than a sparrow, very lovely to look on, but I think good for nothing else: some being in colour white like snow, and their tail about one foot in length, and their heads black like jet, with a tuft like a plume of feathers standing upright thereon.

¹ Knox is probably using Kandyan Sinhalese names which have since passed out of use. Ferguson refers to *mal kavudā*, 'the Ceylon Mynah'; Wait (*The Birds of Ceylon*) has *mal kavadiyā*, or 'the Ceylon Grackle'. Ferguson equates *cau-cowda* with Sinhalese *kaha kurullā*. But this is the Oriole. Wait calls the *gou kavadiyā* 'the Common Ceylon Mynah'.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR

There are others of the same sort only differing in colour, being reddish like a ripe orange, and on the head a plume of black feathers standing up. I suppose, one may be the cock, and the other the hen.

The King has geese, ducks, turkeys, pigeons, which he keeps tame, but none else may. Turkeys he delights not in, because they change the colour of their heads: neither does he kill any of these to eat, nor any other creature of what sort soever, and he has many, that he keeps tame.

They have no want of fish, and those good ones too. All little rivers and streams running through the valleys are full of small fish, but the boys and others wanting somewhat to eat with their rice, do continually catch them before they come to maturity: nay all their ponds are full of them, which in dry weather drying up, the people catch multitudes of them in this manner. They have a kind of a basket made of small sticks, so close that fish cannot get through; it is broad at bottom, and narrow at top, like a funnel, the hole big enough for a man to thrust his arm in, wide at the mouth about two or three feet; these baskets they job¹ down, and the end sticks in the mud, which often happen upon a fish; when they do, they feel it by the fish beating itself against the sides. Then they put in their hands and take them out. And rieve² a rattan through their gills, and so let them drag after them. One end of this rattan is stuck in the fisher's girdle, and the other knotted, that the fish should not slip off: which when it is full he discharges himself of them by carrying them ashore. Nay, every

¹ thrust, a variant of 'jab'.

² pierce.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR ditch and little splash¹ of water but ankle deep has fish in it.

Of serpents, there are these sorts. The *pimberah*,² the body whereof is as big as a man's middle, and of a length proportionable. It is not swift, but by subtlety will catch his prey; which are deer or other cattle; he lies in the path where the deer use to pass, and as they go, he claps hold of them by a kind of peg that grows on his tail, with which he strikes them. He will swallow a roebuck whole, horns and all; so that it happens sometimes the horns run through his belly, and kill him. A stag was caught by one of these *pimberahs*, which seized him by the buttock, and held him so fast, that he could not get away, but ran a few steps this way and that way. An Indian seeing the stag run thus, supposed him in a snare, and having a gun shot him; at which he gave so strong a jerk, that it pulled the serpent's head off, while his tail was encompassing a tree to hold the stag the better.

There is another venomous snake called *polonga*,³ the most venomous of all, that kills cattle. Two sorts of them I have seen, the one green, the other of a reddish grey, full of white rings along the sides, and about five or six feet long.

Another poisonous snake there is called *noya*, of a greyish colour, about four feet long. This will stand with half his body upright two or three hours together, and spread his head broad open, where there appears like as it were a pair of spectacles painted on it. The Indians call this *noy-rodgerah*, that is, king's snake, that will do no harm. But if

¹ pool.

² Sinhalese for python.

³ the viper.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED- FOR the *polonga* and the *noya* meet together, they cease not fighting till one has killed the other.

In this island are several sorts of precious stones, which the King for his part has enough of, and so cares not to have more discovery made. For in certain places where they are known to be, are sharp poles set up fixed in the ground, signifying, that none upon pain of being stuck and impaled upon those poles, presume so much as to go that way; also there are certain rivers, out of which it is generally reported they do take rubies and sapphires for the King's use, and cat's-eyes. And I have seen several pretty coloured stones, some as big as cherry-stones, some as buttons, and transparent, but understood not what they were. Rubies and sapphires I myself have seen here.

Here is iron and crystal in great plenty. Saltpetre they can make. Brimstone some say, is here, but the King will not have it discovered. Steel they can make of their iron. Ebony in great abundance, with choice of tall and large timber, cardamoms, jaggery, rack,¹ oil, black lead, turmeric, salt, rice, betel-nuts, musk, wax, pepper. Which last grows here very well, and might be in great plenty, if it had a vend.² And the peculiar commodity of the island, cinnamon. Wild cattle, and wild honey in great plenty in the woods; it lies in holes or hollow trees, free for any that will take the pains to get it. Elephants' teeth, and cotton, of which there is good plenty, growing in their own grounds, sufficient to make them good and strong cloth for their own use, and also to sell to the people of the uplands, where cotton is not so plenty. All these things the

¹ arrack.

² sale.

CREATURES THIS COUNTRY IS FAMED FOR
lands affords, and it might do it in much greater
quantity, if the people were but laborious and indus-
trious. But that they are not. For the Sinhalese
are naturally, a people given to sloth and laziness: if
they can but any ways live, they abhor to work;
only what their necessities force them to, they do,
that is, to get food and raiment. Yet in this I must
a little vindicate them; for what indeed should they
do with more than food and raiment, seeing as
their estates increase, so do their taxes also? And
although the people be generally covetous, spending
but a little, scraping together what they can, yet
such is the government they are under, that they are
afraid to be known to have anything, lest it be taken
away from them. Neither have they any encourage-
ment for their industry, having no vend by traffic
and commerce for what they have got.

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PART III

CHAPTER XIII

THE KING—HIS RULE AND PERSON

HITHERTO I have treated of the country, with the provisions and wealth of it: our next discourses shall be of the political government there exercised. And here order will lead us to speak first of the King and matters relating to him.

Anciently this country consisted of nine kingdoms, all which had their several kings; but now by the vicissitude of times and things, they are all reduced under one king, who is an absolute tyrant, and rules the most arbitrarily of any king in the world.

As to the person of the present King. He is not tall, but very well set, nor of the clearest colour of their complexion, but somewhat of the blackest; great rolling eyes, turning them and looking every way, always moving them: a brisk bold look, a great swelling belly, and very lively in his actions and behaviour; somewhat bald, not having much hair upon his head, and that grey, a large comely beard, with great whiskers; in conclusion, a very comely man. He bears his years well, being between seventy and eighty years of age; and though an old man, yet appears not to be like one, neither in countenance nor action. His apparel is very strange and wonderful, not after his own country-fashion, or any other, being made after his own invention. On his head he wears a cap with four corners like a Jesuit's, three tiers high,

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and a feather standing upright before, like that in the head of a fore-horse in a team, a long band hanging down his back after the Portuguese fashion, his doublet after so strange a shape, that I cannot well describe it, the body of one, and the sleeves of another colour; he wears long breeches to his ankles, shoes and stockings. He does not always keep to one fashion, but changes as his fancy leads him; but always when he comes abroad, his sword hangs by his side in a belt over his shoulder: which no Sinhalese dare wear: a gold hilt, and scabbard most of beaten gold. Commonly he holds in his hand a small cane, painted of divers colours, and towards the lower end set round about with such stones, as he has, and pleases, with a head of gold.

His right and lawful Queen, who was a Malabar, brought from the coast, is still living, but has not been with him, as is known, this twenty years, remaining in the city of Kandy, where he left her; she wants indeed neither maintenance nor attendance, but never comes out of the palace.

He keeps his Court at Diyatilaka Nuvara, whither he fled in a rebellion against him. His palace stands adjoining to a great hill, which was before mentioned; near unto that part of the hill next abutting upon his court none dares presume to set his foot; that being for his safeguard to fly unto in time of need. The palace is walled about with a clay wall, and thatched, to prevent the clays being melted by the rains, which are great and violent: within this wall it is all full of houses; most of which are low and thatched; but some are two stories high, and tiled very handsomely with open galleries for air,

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railed about with turned banisters, one ebony, and one painted, but not much prospect, standing between two hills. And indeed the King lives there not so much for pleasure as security. The palace itself has many large and stately gates two-leaved; these gates, with their posts, excellently carved; the ironwork thereunto belonging, as bolts and locks, all rarely engraved. The windows inlaid with silver plates and ebony. On the top of the houses of his palace and treasury, stand earthen pots at each corner; which are for ornament; or which is a newer fashion something made of earth resembling flowers and branches. And no houses besides, except temples, may have these placed upon them. The contrivance of his palace is, as I may say, like Woodstock Bower,¹ with many turnings and windings, and doors, he himself having ordered and contrived all these buildings, and the manner of them. At all the doors and passages stand watches: and they who thus give attendance are not to pass without special order from one place to another, but are to remain in that place or at that gate, where the King has appointed them. By means of these contrivances it is not easy to know in what part or place his person is, neither does he care they should.

Sometimes he walks about his palace, where there are certain pedestals of stone whitened with lime and laid in oil, so that they look purely white, made and set up in divers places, here he stands when he comes forth, that he might be above the rest of the people, and see about him. But when he is minded to go abroad, though it be never so little a way, and

¹ The reference is to the famous bower of Fair Rosamond in Woodstock.

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he seldom or never goes far, order is given some time before, for all soldiers of his guards which are a great many, it may be thousands, together with a Dutch and Portuguese Captain with their flags and soldiers, drummers, trumpeters, pipers, singers, and all belonging, as elephants, horses, falconers with their falcons, and many others, to stand at the gate in a readiness to attend his pleasure. And though he means not to come forth, yet they must wait in this manner, until he give order, that they may depart to their houses. Commonly all this assembly are gathered together at the palace three or four times before he comes out once. And oftentimes he comes out when none there are aware of it, with only those that attend on his person within his palace. And then when it is heard, that His Majesty is come forth, they all run ready to break their necks, and place themselves at a distance to guard his person and wait his pleasure. Sometimes, but very seldom, he comes forth riding upon a horse or elephant. But usually he is brought out in a palankeen; which is nothing so well made as in other parts of India. The ends of the bamboo it is carried by, are largely¹ tipped with silver, and curiously wrought and engraved: for he has very good workmen of that profession.

He is temperate in his diet. I am informed by those that have attended on his person in his palace, that though he has all sorts of varieties the land affords brought to his table, yet his chief fare is herbs, and ripe pleasant fruits: and this but once a day. Whatsoever is brought for him to eat or drink is covered with a white cloth,

¹ profusely, handsomely.

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and whoever brings it, has a muffler tied about his mouth, lest he should breathe upon the King's food. The King's manner of eating is thus. He sits upon a stool before a small table covered with a white cloth, all alone. He eats on a green plantain-leaf laid in a golden basin. There are twenty or thirty dishes prepared for him, which are brought into his dining-room. And which of these dishes the King pleases to call for, a nobleman appointed for that service, takes a portion of and reaches in a ladle to the King's basin. This person also waits with a muffler about his mouth.

His pride and affectation¹ of honour is unmeasurable. Which appears in his people's manner of address to him, which he either commands or allows of. When they come before him they fall flat down on their faces to the ground at three several times, and then they sit with their legs under them upon their knees all the time they are in his presence: and when he bids them to absent, they go backwards, until they are out of his sight, or a great distance from him. But of Christian people indeed he requires no more than to kneel with their hats off before him.

He is crafty, cautious, a great dissembler, nor does he want wisdom. He is not passionate in his anger. For with whomsoever he be angry, he will not show it: neither is he rash or over-hasty in any matters, but does all things with deliberation, though but with little advice: asking counsel of nobody but himself. He accounts it wit and policy to lie and dissemble, that his intents and purposes may the better be concealed; but he abhors and punishes those that lie to him.

¹ display.

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Sometimes for his pleasure, he will ride or be carried to his banqueting-house, which is about a musket-shot from his palace. It stands on a little hill; where with abundance of pains and many months' labour, they have made a little plain, in length not much above an arrow's flight, in breadth less. Where at the head of a small valley, he has made a bank across to stop the water running down. It is now become a fine pond, and exceeding full of fish. At this place the King has several houses built according to his own appointment, very handsome, borne up with carved pillars and painted, and round about rails and banisters turned, one painted and one ebony, like a balcony. Some standing high upon a wall, being for him to sit in, and see sport with his elephants, and other beasts, as also for a prospect abroad. Others standing over this pond, where he himself sits and feeds his fish with boiled rice, fruits and sweetmeats. They are so tame that they will come and eat in his hand; but never does he suffer any to be caught. This pond is useful for his elephants to wash in. The plain was made for his horses to run upon. For oftentimes he commands his grooms to get up and ride in his presence; and sometimes for that good service, gives the rider five or ten shillings, and it may be a piece of cloth. Always when he comes forth, his horses are brought out ready saddled before him; but he himself mounts them very seldom. All of which he had from the Dutch, some sent to him for presents, and some he has taken in war. He has in all some twelve or fourteen; some of which are Persian horses.

Other pastimes and recreations he has (for this is all he minds or regards): as to make them bring

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wild elephants out of the woods, and catch them in his presence. Also when he comes out of his court, he delights to look upon his hawks, although he never uses them for his game; sometimes on his dogs, and tame deer, and tigers, and strange kind of birds and beasts; of both which he has a great many.

As to the manner of his government, it is tyrannical and arbitrary in the highest degree: for he rules absolute, and after his own will and pleasure: his own head being his only counsellor. The land all at his disposal and all the people from the highest to the lowest slaves, or very like slaves: both in body and goods wholly at his command. Neither wants he those three virtues of a tyrant, jealousy,¹ dissimulation, and cruelty.

But because policy is a necessary endowment of a prince, I will first show in an instance or two, that he is not devoid of it.

The country being wholly his, the King farms out his land, not for money, but service. And the people enjoy portions of land from the King, and instead of rent, they have their several appointments, some are to serve the King in his wars, some in their trades, some serve him for labourers, and others are as farmers to furnish his house with the fruits of the ground; and so all things are done without cost and every man paid for his pains: that is, they have lands for it; yet all have not watered land enough for their needs, that is, such land as good rice requires to grow in; so that such are fain to sow on dry land, and till other men's fields for a subsistence. These persons are free from payment of taxes; only sometimes upon

¹ suspicion.

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extraordinary occasions, they must give a hen or mat or such like, to the King's use: for as much as they use the wood and water that is in his country. But if any find the duty to be heavy, or too much for them, they may leaving their house and land, be free from the King's service, as there is a multitude who do. And in my judgement they live far more at ease, after they have relinquished the King's land, than when they had it.

Three times in the year they usually carry their rents unto the King. The one is at New Year called *Ourida Cotamaul*.¹ The other is for the First Fruits, *Alleusal Cotamaul*.¹ And the last is at a certain sacrifice in the month of November to their God, called *Ilmoy Cotamaul*.¹ But besides these, whatsoever is wanting in the King's house at any other time, and they have it, they must upon the King's order bring it. These rents are but little money, but chiefly corn, rice, or what grows out of the ground.

To speak a little of the first time, viz. at the beginning of the New Year, when the King's duties are brought him. Their New Year is always either the 27th, or the 28th, or the 29th of March,² at this time upon a special and good day (for which the astrologers are consulted) the King washes his head, which is a very great solemnity among them. The palace is all adorned with *tor-nes*, a sort of triumphal arches, that make a very fine show. They are high

¹ *Avurudu Kattimagula, Alutsāl Kāttimagula and Il Mahē Kattimagula*: Ferguson (ibid.).

² The discrepancy between this date and the celebration of the New Year festival in April is to be explained by Knox's use of the Julian calendar. England did not officially adopt the Gregorian till the middle of the eighteenth century.

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poles standing in rows before all the gates of the palace, either nine or seven in a row, the middlemost being the highest, and so they fall lower and lower on each side. Through the middle of them there is an arched passage which serves for a door. On the top of the poles are flags flying and all about hung full of painted cloth with images, and figures of men, and beasts, and birds, and flowers: fruits also are hanged up in great order and exactness. On each side of the entrance of the arch stand plantain trees, with bunches of plantains on them as if they were growing.

There are other revenues the King has, which are accidental; but bring in great wealth; that whensoever any man dies, that has a stock of cattle, immediately out thence must be paid a bull and a cow with a calf, and a male and female buffalo, which tax they call *marral*. And there are officers appointed, whose place it is, to come and carry them away. Also at harvest yearly there is a certain rate of corn to be paid by every man according to the land they hold and enjoy. Heretofore the King granted, that upon payment of a sum of money, they should be clear from this yearly tax of corn so long, till the present possessor died, and the land descended to his son or somebody else. And then the estate became liable again to the fore-mentioned duties. But now of late there is no mention of any discharge by money. So that in time all houses and families in the kingdom will be liable to the payment of this tax of corn; which will bring in no small quantity of provision to the King. Only soldiers that are slain in the wars, their lands are free from the payment of this tax; but if they die naturally they are not.

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The farmers all in general, besides their measures of corn, pay a certain duty in money, with their rents.

If they sell or alienate their inheritances, the King's accustomed duties must not be diminished, whosoever buys or enjoys them. Neither is here any land which does not either pay, or do some duty to the King. Only one case excepted, and that is, if they give or dedicate land to a priest, as an alms or deed of charity in God's name. On that there is never any more tax or duty to be imposed, as being sacrilegious to take ought from one that belongs to the temple. Formerly the King had the benefit of the trade of two ports Koddigar and Puttalam, unto each of which used to come yearly some twenty or thirty sail of small vessel, which brought considerable customs in. But now the Hollanders have deprived him of both, suffering no vessels to come.

The land that is under his jurisdiction, is all his, with the people, their estates, and whatsoever it affords, or is therein. But that which he does chiefly value and esteem, are toys and novelties, as hawks, horses, dogs, strange birds, and beasts, and particularly a spotted elephant, and good arms, of which he has no want.

CHAPTER XIV

GREAT OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS

THERE are two, who are the greatest and highest officers in the land. They are called *Adigars*, I may term them Chief Judges; under whom is the government of the cities, and the country also

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in the vacancy of other Governors. All people have liberty in default of justice to appeal to these *Adigars*, or if their causes and differences be not decided by their Governors according to their minds.

Next under the *Adigars*, are the *Dissauvas*, who are Governors over provinces and counties of the land. Each province and county has its Governor; but all Governors are not *Dissauvas*, nor other great officers known by other names or titles, as *Roterauls* and *Vidanies*. But all these are Generals or Chief Commanders, who have a certain number of soldiers under them. These great men are to provide that good order be kept in the counties over which they are placed, and that the King's accustomed duty be brought in due season to the court. They have power also to decide controversies between the people of their jurisdiction, and to punish contentious and disorderly persons, which they do chiefly by amercing a fine¹ from them, which is for their profit, for it is their own: and also by committing them to prison. Into which when they are once fallen, no means without money can get them out again. But be the fact never so heinous (murder itself) they can put none to death. The sentences of death being pronounced only by the King. They also are sent upon expeditions in war with their soldiers, and give attendance, and watch at court in their appointed stations.

These *Dissauvas* are also to see that the soldiers in their counties do come in due season and order for that purpose.

They are appointed by the King himself, not for

¹ imposing the punishment of a fine.

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life, but during his good pleasure. And when they are dead or removed, oftentimes their places lie void, sometimes for months, sometimes perhaps for years; during which time the *Adigar* rules and governs those counties; and for his labour receives all such incomes and profits as are accustomed and of right do belong to the Governor.

The King when he advances any to be *Dissauvas*, or to any other great office regards not their ability or sufficiency to perform the same, only they must be persons of good rank, and gentle extraction: and they are all naturally discreet and very solid, and so the fitter for the King's employment.

When there is a new Governor made over any county, it is the custom that that whole county comes up to appear before him at the court, for there his residence is. Neither may they come empty-handed, but each one must bring his gift or present with him. These also are expected at other times to be brought unto him by the people, though they have no business with him, no suits or causes to be decided: even private soldiers at their first coming though to their due watch, must personally appear before their commander, and if he has nothing else, he must present him with forty leaves of green betel, which he with his own hand receives, and they with both theirs deliver into his, which is taken for an honour he vouchsafes them.

They have several officers under them, the chief of whom is the *Courlividani*. This person beside his entertainment in the country unto which he is sent to govern under the *Dissauva*, has a due revenue, but smaller than that of the Governor. His chief

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business is to rack and hale¹ all that may be for his master, and to see good government, and if there be any difference or quarrel between one or other, he takes a fine from both, and carries to the Governor, not regarding equity but the profit of himself and him that employs him. But he hears their case and determines it. And if they like not his sentence they may remove their business unto the Governor himself, whose desire is not so much to find out the right of the cause, as that that may be most for his own interest and profit. And these carriages² cannot reconcile them much love among the people; but the more they are hated by the people for their rigorous government, the better they please the King. For he cares not that the country should affect the great men.

The *Dissauvas* by these *Courlividani*, their officers, do oppress and squeeze the people, by laying mulcts upon them for some crimes or misdemeanours, that they will find and lay to their charge. In fine this officer is the *Dissauva's* chief substitute, who orders and manages all affairs incumbent upon his master.

These inferior officers commonly get their places by bribery; their children do pretend a right to them after their father's death, and will be preferred before others, greasing the magistrate.

For the hearing complaints and doing justice among neighbours, here are country courts of judicature, consisting of these officers, together with the headmen of the places and towns, where the courts are kept: and these are called *Gom Sabbi*, as much as to say, town-consultations. But if any do not like, and is loth to stand by what they have

¹ extort.

² the way these things are carried out.

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determined, and think themselves wronged, they may appeal to their head Governor, that dwells at court; but it is chargeable, for he must have a fee. They may appeal also from him to the *Adigars*, or the Chief Justices of the kingdom. But whoso gives the greatest bribe, he shall overcome. For it is a common saying in this land, that he that has money to see the judge, needs not fear nor care, whether his cause be right or not. The greatest punishment that these judges can inflict upon the greatest malefactors, is but imprisonment. From which money will release them.

Some have adventured to appeal to the King sometimes; falling down on the ground before him at his coming forth, which is the manner of their obeisance to him, to complain of injustice. Sometimes he will give order to the great ones to do them right, and sometimes bid them wait, until he is pleased to hear the cause, which is not suddenly;¹ for he is very slow in all his business: neither dare they then depart from the court, having been bidden to stay. Where they stay till they are weary, being at expense, so that the remedy is worse than the disease. And sometimes again when they thus fall before him, he commands to beat them and put them in chains for troubling of him; and perhaps in that condition they may lie for some years.

The greatest title that is allowed in the city to be given to the greatest man is *Oussary*, which signifies Worshipful. But when they are abroad from the King, men call them *Sihattu* and *Dishondrew*, implying, Honour and Excellency. These grandees whensoever they walk abroad, their

¹ immediately.

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manner is in state to lean upon the arm of some man or boy. And the *Adigar* besides this piece of state, wheresoever he goes, there is one with a great whip goes before him slashing it, that the people may have notice that the *Adigar* is coming.

The King has no artificial forts or castles, but nature has supplied the want of them. For his whole country of Kandy, standing upon such high hills, and those so difficult to pass, is all an impregnable fort: and so is more especially Diyatilaka Nuvara his present palace. These places have been already described at large; and therefore I omit speaking any further of them here.

There are constant watches set in convenient places in all parts of the country, and thorn-gates: but in time of danger, besides the ordinary watches, in all towns, and in all places and in every cross-road, exceeding thick, that 'tis not possible for any to pass unobserved.

Besides the *Dissauvas*, spoken of before, who are great generals, there are other great captains. As those they call *Mote-ralls*;¹ as much as to say, scribes. Because they keep the rolls or registers of certain companies of soldiers, each containing 970 men, who are under their command. Of these *Mote-ralls*, there are four principal. But besides these, there are smaller commanders over soldiers; who have their places from the King, and are not under the command of the former great ones.

All these, both commanders and common soldiers must wait at the court. But with this difference. The great men must do it continually: each having

¹ *Mohottī rāla* : Ferguson (ibid.).

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his particular watch appointed by the King. But the private soldiers take their turns of watching. And when they go, they do carry all their provisions for the time of their stay with them upon their backs. These soldiers are not listed¹ (listing soldiers being only upon extraordinary occasions), but are by succession, the son after the father. For which service they enjoy certain lands and inheritances, which is instead of wages or pay. This duty if they omit or neglect, they lose or forfeit their inheritance. Or if they please to be released or discharged, they may, parting with their land. And then their commander places another in their room; but so long as the land lies void, he converts the profits to his own proper use. And he that after takes it, gives a bribe to the commander, who yet notwithstanding will not permit him to hold it above two or three years unless he renew his bribes.

The soldiers of the highlands called Kandy, are dispersed all over the land; so that one scarcely knows the other, the King not suffering many neighbours and townsmen to be in one company; which has always heretofore been so ordered for fear of conspiracies.

When the armies are sent abroad, as he does send them very often against the Dutch, it goes very hard with the soldiers; who must carry their victuals and pots to dress it in upon their backs, besides their arms, which are swords, pikes, bows and arrows, and good guns. As for tents, for their armies always lie in the fields, they carry tallipot leaves, which are very light and convenient, along with them. With these they make their tents: fixing sticks into the

¹ enlisted.

GREAT OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS

ground, and laying other pieces of wood overthwart,¹ after the manner of the roof of a house, and so lay their leaves over all, to shoot the rains off. Making these tents stronger or slighter, according to the time of their tarrying. And having spent what provisions they carried out with them, they go home to fetch more. So that after a month or two a great part of the army is always absent.

Whensoever the King sends his armies abroad upon any expedition, the watches beyond them are all secured immediately, to prevent any from passing to carry intelligence to the enemy. The soldiers themselves do not know the design they are sent upon, until they come there. None can know his intentions or meaning by his actions. For sometimes he sends commanders with their soldiers to lie in certain places in the woods until further order, or until he send ammunition to them. And perhaps when they have laid there long enough, he sends for them back again. And after this manner oftentimes he catches the Hollanders before they be aware, to their great prejudice and damage. He cares not that his great men should be free-spirited or valiant; if there be any better than the rest, them to be sure suddenly he cuts off, lest they might do him any mischief.

In their war there is but little valour used, although they do accomplish many notable exploits. For all they do is by crafty stratagems.

By the long wars first between them and the Portuguese and since with the Hollanders, they have had such ample experience, as has much improved them in the art of war above what they were

¹ crosswise.

THE NATURAL AND PROPER PEOPLE

formerly. And many of the chief commanders and leaders of their armies are men which formerly served the Portuguese against them. By which they come to know the disposition and discipline of Christian armies. Insomuch as they have given the Dutch several overthrows, and taken forts from them, which they had up in the country.

CHAPTER XV

THE NATURAL AND PROPER PEOPLE

BESIDES the Dutch who possess, as I judge, about one fourth of the island, there are Malabars, that are free citizens, and pay duty to the King for the land they enjoy, as the King's natural subjects do; there are also Moors, who are like strangers, and hold no land, but live by carrying goods to the seaports, which now are in the Hollanders' hands. The seaports are inhabited by a mixed people, Malabars and Moors, and some that are black, who profess themselves Roman Catholics, and wear crosses, and use beads. Some of these are under the Hollanders; and pay toll and tribute to them.

But I am to speak only of the natural proper people of the island, which they call Sinhalese.

I have asked them, whence they derive themselves, but they could not tell. They say their land was first inhabited by devils, of which they have a long fable.

But nothing is more improbable than this story.

THE NATURAL AND PROPER PEOPLE

It is more probable, they came from the Malabars, their country lying next, though they do resemble them little or nothing. I know no nation in the world do so exactly resemble the Sinhalese as the people of Europe.

Of the natives there be two sorts, wild and tame. I will begin with the former. For as in these woods there are wild beasts; so wild men also. The land of Bintenne is all covered with mighty woods, filled with abundance of deer. In this land are many of these wild men; they call them Veddahs, dwelling near no other inhabitants. They speak the Sinhalese language. They kill deer and dry the flesh over the fire, and the people of the country come and buy it of them. They never till any ground for corn, their food being only flesh. They are very expert with their bows. They have a little axe, which they stick in by their sides, to cut honey out of hollow trees. Some few, which are near inhabitants, have commerce with other people. They have no towns nor houses, only live by the waters under a tree, with some boughs cut and laid round about them, to give notice when any wild beasts come near, which they may hear by their rustling and trampling upon them. Many of these habitations we saw when we fled through the woods, but God be praised the Veddahs were gone.

But to come to the civilized inhabitants, whom I am chiefly to treat of. They are a people proper and very well favoured, beyond all people that I have seen in India, wearing a cloth about their loins, and a doublet after the English fashion, with little skirts buttoned at the wrists, and gathered at the shoulders like a shirt, on their heads a red Tunis

THE NATURAL AND PROPER PEOPLE

cap, or if they have none, another cap with flaps of the fashion of their country.

They are very active and nimble in their limbs: and very ingenious: for, except ironwork, all other things they have need of, they make and do themselves: insomuch that they all build their own houses. They are very vigilant and wakeful, sufficed with very little sleep: very hardy both for diet and weather, very proud and self-conceited. They take something after the Brahmins, with whom they scruple not both to marry and eat. In both which otherwise they are exceeding shy and cautious. For there being many ranks or castes among them, they will not match with any inferior to themselves; nor eat meat dressed in any house, but in those only that are of as good a caste or race as themselves: and that which any one has left, none but those that are near of kin will eat.

They are not very malicious one towards another; and their anger does not last long; seldom or never any blood shed among them in their quarrels. It is not customary to strike; and it is very rare they give a blow so much as to their slaves; who may very familiarly talk and discourse with their masters. They are very near¹ and covetous, and will pinch their own bellies for profit; very few spendthrifts or bad husbands are to be met with here.

The natures of the inhabitants of the mountains and lowlands are very different. They of the lowlands are kind, pitiful, helpful, honest and plain, compassionating strangers, which we found by our own experience among them. They of the uplands are ill-natured, false, unkind, though outwardly fair

¹ careful.

THE NATURAL AND PROPER PEOPLE

and seemingly courteous, and of more complaisant carriage, speech and better behaviour than the lowlanders.

Of all vices they are least addicted to stealing, the which they do exceedingly hate and abhor; so that there are but few robberies committed among them. They do much extol and command chastity, temperance, and truth in words and actions; and confess that it is out of weakness and infirmity, that they cannot practise the same, acknowledging that the contrary vices are to be abhorred, being abomination both in the sight of God and man.

They are very superstitious in making observations of any little accidents, as omens portending good to them or evil. Sneezing they reckon to import evil. So that if any chance to sneeze when he is going about his business, he will stop, accounting he shall have ill success if he proceeds. And none may sneeze, cough, nor spit in the King's presence, either because of the ill-boding of those actions, or the rudeness of them or both. There is a little creature much like a lizard, which they look upon altogether as a prophet, whatsoever work or business they are going about; if he cries, they will cease for a space, reckoning that he tells them there is a bad planet rules at that instant. They take great notice in a morning at their first going out, who first appears in their sight: and if they see a white man, or a big-bellied woman, they hold it fortunate: and to see any decrepit or deformed people, as unfortunate.

In short, in carriage and behaviour they are very grave and stately like unto the Portuguese, in understanding quick and apprehensive, in design

THE NATURAL AND PROPER PEOPLE

subtle and crafty, in discourse courteous but full of flatteries, naturally inclined to temperance both in meat and drink, near and provident in their families, commending good husbandry. In their dispositions not passionate, neither hard to be reconciled again when angry. In their promises very unfaithful; delighting in sloth, deferring labour till urgent necessity constrain them, neat in apparel, nice in eating; and not given to much sleep.

As for the women, their habit^r is a waistcoat of white calico covering their bodies, wrought into flourishes with blue and red; their cloth hanging longer or shorter below their knees, according to their quality; a piece of silk flung over their heads; jewels in their ears, ornaments about their necks, and arms, and middles. They are in their gait and behaviour very high, stately in their carriage after the Portuguese manner, of whom I think they have learned: yet they hold it no scorn to admit the meanest to come to speech of them. They are very thrifty, and it is a disgrace to them to be prodigal, and their pride and glory to be accounted near and saving. And to praise themselves they will sometimes say, that scraps and parings will serve them; but that the best is for their husbands. The men are not jealous of their wives, for the greatest ladies in the land will frequently talk and discourse with any men they please, although their husbands be in presence. And although they be so stately, they will lay their hand to such work as is necessary to be done in the house, notwithstanding they have slaves and servants enough to do it.

Among this people there are divers and sundry

^r mode of dress.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

castes or degrees of quality, which is not according to their riches or places of honour the King promotes them to, but according to their descent and blood. And whatsoever this honour is, be it higher or lower, it remains hereditary from generation to generation. They abhor to eat or drink, or intermarry with any of inferior quality to themselves. The signs of higher or meaner ranks, are wearing of doublets, or going bare-backed without them; the length of their cloth below their knees; their sitting on stools, or on blocks or mats spread on the ground; and in their caps.

The highest, are their noblemen, called *Hondrews*. Which I suppose comes from the word *Homdrewne*, a title given to the King, signifying Majesty: these being honourable people. 'Tis out of this sort alone, that the King chooses his great officers and whom he employs in his court, and appoints for Governors over his country. Riches are not here valued, nor make any the more honourable. For many of the lower sorts do far exceed these *Hondrews* in estates. But it is the birth and parentage that ennobles.

CHAPTER XVI

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

THE religion of the country is idolatry. There are many both gods and devils, which they worship, known by particular names, which they call them by. They do acknowledge one to be the supreme, whom they call *Ossa polla maupt Dio*,¹ which signifies the

¹ Sinhalese *Ahasa polō mav Deyiyō*, according to Ferguson (ibid.).

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

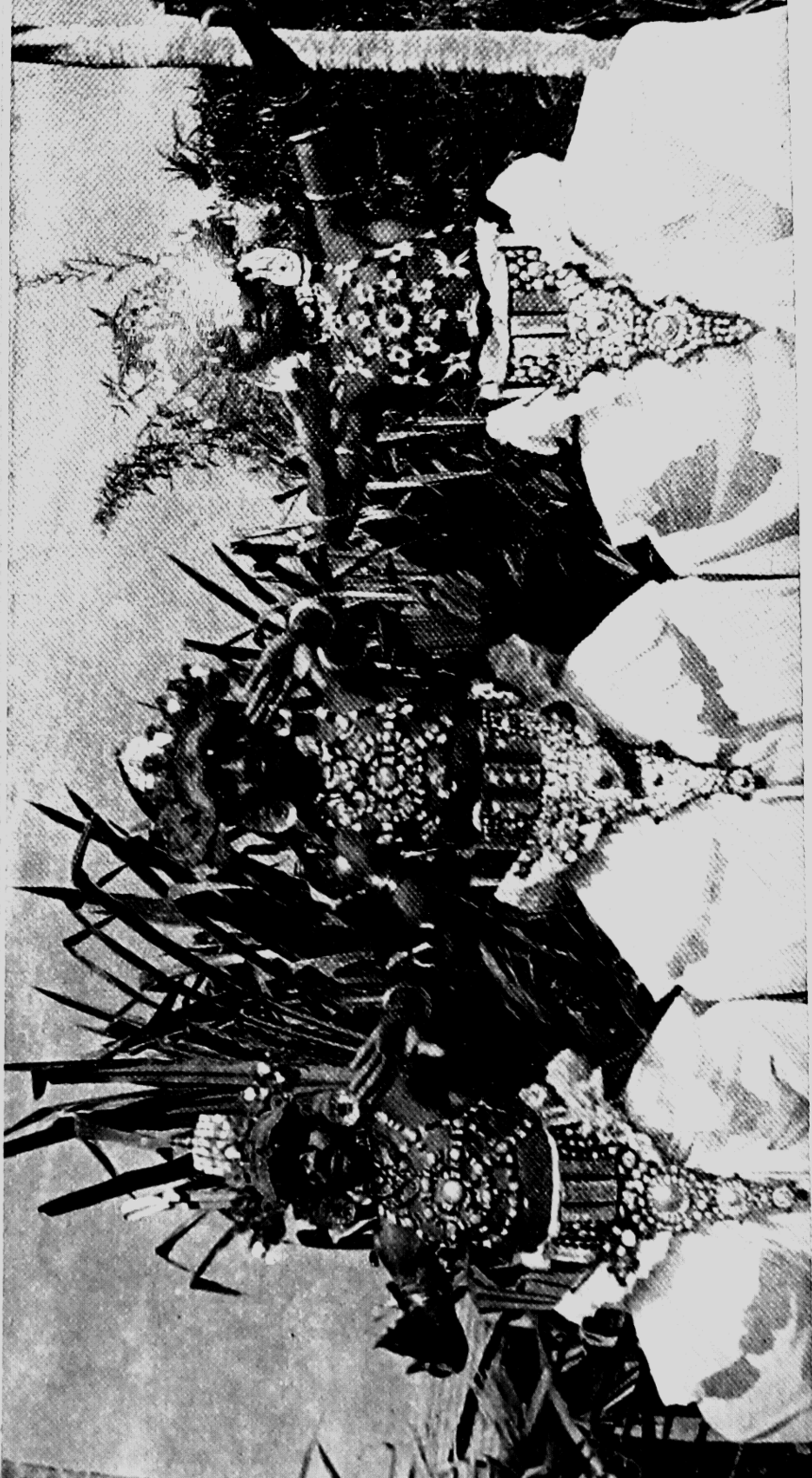
creator of heaven and earth; and it is he also, who still rules and governs the same. This great supreme god, they hold, sends forth other deities to see his will and pleasure executed in the world; and these are the petty and inferior gods. These they say are the souls of good men, who formerly lived upon the earth. There are devils also, who are the inflictors of sickness and misery upon them. And these they hold to be the souls of evil men.

There is another great god, whom they call Buddha, unto whom the salvation of souls belongs. Him they believe once to have come upon the earth. And when he was here, that he did usually sit under a large shady tree, called *bogaha*. Which trees ever since are accounted holy, and under which with great solemnities they do to this day celebrate the ceremonies of his worship. He departed from the earth from the top of the highest mountain on the island, called Adam's Peak: where there is an impression like a foot, which, they say, is his, as has been mentioned before.

The pagodas or temples of their gods are so many that I cannot number them. Many of them are of rare and exquisite work, built of hewn stone, engraved with images and figures; but by whom and when I could not attain to know, the inhabitants themselves being ignorant therein. But sure I am they were built by far more ingenious artificers than the Sinhalese that now are on the land. For the Portuguese in their invasions have defaced some of them, which there is none found that has skill enough to repair to this day.

The fashion of these pagodas are different; some, to wit those that were anciently built, are of better

[illegible]



'A COMPANY OF MEN DANCING'

[see p. 139]

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

workmanship, as was said before; but those lately erected are far inferior; made only with clay and sticks, and no windows. Some, viz. those belonging to the Buddha, are in the form of a pigeon-house, foursquare, one storey high, and some two; the room above has its idols as well as that below. Some of them are tiled, and some thatched.

In them are idols and images most monstrous to behold, some of silver, some of brass and other metals; and also painted sticks, and targets,¹ and most strange kind of arms, as bills,² arrows, spears and swords. But these arms are not in the Buddha's temples, he being for peace: therefore there are in his temples only images of men cross-legged with yellow coats on like the *Gonni*³ priests, their hair frizzled, and their hands before them like women. And these they say are the spirits of holy men departed. Their temples are adorned with such things as the people's ability and poverty can afford; they account it the highest point of devotion, bountifully to dedicate such things unto their gods, which in their estimation are most precious.

Unto each of these pagodas, there are great revenues of land belonging: which have been allotted to them by former kings, according to the state of the kingdom: but they have much impaired the revenues of the crown, there being rather more towns belonging to the church than unto the King. These estates of the temples are to supply a daily charge they are at; which is to prepare victuals or sacrifices to set before the idols. They have elephants also as the King has, which serve them for state.

¹ shields.

² short axes.

³ Sinhalese *gana*.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

Their temples have all sorts of officers belonging to them, as the palace has.

All blessings and good success, they say, come from the hand of God, but sickness and diseases proceed from the devil; not that of himself he has such absolute power, but as servants have power, licence and authority from their masters, so they from God.

The first and highest order of priests are the *Tirinanxes*,¹ who are the priests of the Buddha God. Their temples are styled *vihars*. There is a religious house in the city of Diyatilaka Nuvara, where they dwell and assemble and consult together about their affairs, which being the meeting-place of such holy men, they call it a *vihara* also; they admit none to come into their order but persons of the most noble birth, and that have learning and be well bred; of such they admit many. But they do not presently upon their admission arrive unto the high degree of a *Tirinanx*. For of these there are but three or four: and they are chosen out of all the rest of the order unto this degree. These *Tirinanxes* only live in the *vihara*, and enjoy great revenues, and are as it were the superiors of all the priests, and are made by the King.

All the rest of the order are called *Gonni*. The habit is the same to the whole order, both *Tirinanxes* and *Gonni*. It is a yellow coat gathered together about their waist, and comes over their left shoulder, girt about with a belt of fine pack-thread. Their heads are shaved, and they go bareheaded and carry in their hands a round fan with a wooden handle, which is to keep the sun off their heads.

¹ Sinhalese *terunansē*.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

They have great benefit and honour. They enjoy their own lands without paying scot or lot¹ or any taxes to the King. They are honoured in such a measure, that the people, wherever they go, bow down to them as they do to their gods, but themselves bow to none. They have the honour of carrying the tallipot with the broad end over their heads foremost; which none but the King does: wheresoever they come, they have a mat and a white cloth laid over upon a stool for them to sit upon; which is also an honour used only to the King.

The second order of priests are those called *Koppuhs*, who are the priests that belong to the temples of the other gods. Their temples are called *dewals*. These are not distinguished by any habit from the rest of the people, no, nor when they are at their worship; only they wear clean cloths, and wash themselves before they go to their service. These are taken out from among the *Hondrews*. They enjoy a piece of land that belongs to the *dewal* where they officiate, and that is all their benefit, unless they steal somewhat that is dedicated to the gods. They follow their husbandry and employments as other men do, but only when the times of worship are, which usually is every morning and evening, oftener or seldomer according as the revenue will hold out, that belongs to that temple, whereof each is priest.

The third order of priests are the *Jaddeses*,² priests of the spirits, which they call *Dayautaus*.³ Their temples are called *covels*, which are inferior to the other temples, and have no revenues belonging

¹ parish or town tax in England.

² Sinhalese *yak dessā*.

³ Sinhalese *dēvata*.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

to them. A man piously disposed, builds a small house at his own charge, which is the temple, and himself becomes priest thereof. Therein are bills, and swords, and arrows, and shields, and images, painted upon the walls like fierce men. This house is seldom called God's house, but most usually *Jacco*, the devil's. Upon some extraordinary festival to the *Jacco* the *Jaddese* shaves off all his beard.

When they are sick, they dedicate a red cock to the devil. Which they do after this manner. They send for the *Jaddese* to their house, and give him a red cock chicken, which he takes up in his hand and holds an arrow with it, and dedicates it to the god, by telling him that if he restore the party to his health, that cock is given to him; and shall be dressed and sacrificed to him in his *covel*. They then let the cock go among the rest of the poultry, and keep it afterwards, it may be, a year or two: and then they carry it to the temple, or the priest comes for it.

But one of their great and frequent businesses with their gods is for the recovery of health. And that god or devil that has made them sick, in his power only it is to restore them. Therefore when they feel themselves sick, or sore, first, they use means to know which god or devil has been the cause or author thereof. Which to find they use these means. With any little stick they make a bow, and on the string thereof they hang a thing they have to cut betel-nuts, somewhat like a pair of scissors; then holding the stick or bow by both ends, they repeat the names of all both gods and devils: and when they come to him who has afflicted them, then the iron on the bow-string will swing. They say by that sign they know their illness

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

proceeds from the power of that god last named; but I think this happens by the power of the hands that hold it. The god being thus found, to him chiefly they offer their oblations and sacrifices.

When they worship those whom they call devils, many of whom they hold to be the spirits of some that died heretofore, they make no images for them, but only build a new house in their yard, like a barn very slight, covered only with leaves, and adorn it with branches and flowers. Into this house they bring some of the weapons or instruments which are in the pagodas or temples, and place them on stools at one end of the house, which is hung with cloth for the purpose, and before them on other stools they lay victuals; and all that time of the sacrifice there is drumming, piping, singing, and dancing. Which being ended, they take the victuals away, and give it to those which drum and pipe, with other beggars and vagabonds; for only such do eat of their sacrifices; not that they do account such things hallowed, and so dare not presume to eat them, but contrariwise they are now looked upon as polluted meat. And if they should attempt to eat thereof, it would be a reproach to them and their generations.¹

And indeed it is sad to consider, how this poor people are subjected to the devil, and they themselves acknowledge it their misery, saying their country is so full of devils, and evil spirits, that unless in this manner they should adore them, they would be destroyed by them.

They have their solemn and annual festivals. Now of these there are two sorts, some belonging

¹ children.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

to their gods that govern the earth, and all things referring to this life; and some belonging to the Buddha, whose province is to take care of the soul and future well-being of men.

I shall first mention the festivals of the former sort. They are two or three. That they may therefore honour these gods, and procure their aid and assistance, they do yearly in the month of June or July, at a new moon, observe a solemn feast and general meeting, called *Perahara*; but none are compelled, and some go to one pagoda, and some to another. The greatest solemnity is performed in the city of Kandy; but at the same time the like festival or *Perahara* is observed in divers other cities and towns of the land. The *Perahara* at Kandy is ordered after this manner:

The priest brings forth a painted stick, about which strings of flowers are hung, and so it is wrapped in branched¹ silk, some part covered, and some not; before which the people bow down and worship; each one presenting him with an offering according to his free will. These free-will offerings being received from the people, the priest takes his painted stick on his shoulder, having a cloth tied about his mouth to keep his breath from defiling this pure piece of wood, and gets up upon an elephant all covered with white cloth, upon which he rides with all the triumph that king and kingdom can afford, through all the streets of the city. But before him go, first some forty or fifty elephants, with brass bells hanging on each side of them, which tinkle as they go.

Next, follow men dressed up like giants, which go

¹ embroidered.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

dancing along agreeable to a tradition they have, that anciently there were huge men, that could carry vast burdens, and pull up trees by the roots, etc. After them go a great multitude of drummers, and trumpeters, and pipers, which make such a great and loud noise, that nothing else besides them can be heard. Then follows a company of men dancing along, and after these women of such castes or trades as are necessary for the service of the pagoda, as potters and washerwomen, each caste goes in companies by themselves, three and three in a row, holding one another by the hand; and between each company go drummers, pipers and dancers.

After these comes an elephant with two priests on his back: one whereof is the priest before spoken of, carrying the painted stick on his shoulder, who represents *Alutnuvara Dio*,¹ that is, the god and maker of heaven and earth. The other sits behind him, holding a round thing, like an umbrella, over his head, to keep off sun or rain. Then within a yard after him on each hand of him follow two other elephants mounted with two other priests, with a priest sitting behind each, holding umbrellas as the former, one of them represents *Kataragama Dio*,² and the other *Potting Dio*.³ These three gods that ride here in company are accounted of all others the greatest and chiefest, each one having his residence in a several pagoda.

Behind go their cook-women, with things like whisks in their hands to scare away flies from them; but very fine as they can make themselves.

Next after the gods and their attendants, go some

¹ Sinhalese *Alutnuvara Deyiyō*. ² Sinhalese *Kataragama Deyiyō*.

³ Sinhalese *Pattini Deyiyō*.

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thousands of ladies and gentlewomen, such as are of the best sort of the inhabitants of the land, arrayed in the bravest¹ manner that their ability can afford, and so go hand in hand three in a row: at which time all beauties in Ceylon in their bravery do go to attend upon their gods in their progress about the city. Now are the streets also all made clean, and on both sides all along the streets poles stuck up with flags and pennants hanging at the tops of them, and adorned with boughs and branches of coconut trees hanging like fringes, and lighted lamps all along on both sides of the streets, both by day and night.

Last of all, go the commanders sent from the King to see these ceremonies decently performed, with their soldiers after them. And in this manner they ride all round about the city once by day and once by night. This festival lasts from the new moon until the full moon.

Formerly the King himself in person used to ride on horseback with all his train before him in this solemnity, but now he delights not in these shows.

Always before the gods set out to take their progress, they are set in the pagoda-door a good while, that the people may come to worship and bring their offerings unto them, during which time there are dancers, playing and showing many pretty tricks of activity before them. To see the which, and also to show themselves in their bravery, occasions more people to resort hither, than otherwise their zeal and devotion would prompt them to do.

Two or three days before the full moon, each

¹ brave = gay, splendid; bravery = finery.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

of these gods has a palankeen carried after them to add unto their honour. In the which there are several pieces of their superstitious relics, and a silver pot. Which just at the hour of full moon they ride out unto a river, and dip full of water, which is carried back with them into the temple, where it is kept till the year after and then flung away. And so the ceremony is ended for that year.

In the month of November, the night when the moon is at the full, there is another great solemn feast, called in their language *Cawtha Puja*.¹ Which is celebrated only by lighting of lamps round about the pagoda. At which time they stick up the longest poles they can get in the woods, at the doors of the pagodas and of the King's palace. Upon which they make contrivances to set lamps in rows one above the other, even unto the very tops of the poles, which they call *tor-nes*. To maintain the charge hereof, all the country in general do contribute, and bring in oil. In this *puja* or sacrifice the King seems to take delight. The reason of which may be, because he participates far more of the honour, than the gods do, in whose name it is celebrated; his palace being far more decked and adorned with high poles and lights, than the temples are. This ceremony lasts but for one night.

And these are their anniversary feasts to the honour of those gods, whose power extends to help them in this life; now follows the manner of their service to the Buddha, who it is, they say, that must save their souls, and the festival in honour of him.

¹ Sinhalese *Kārttika pūja*. For some details of the celebration of this festival, see S. Paranavitana, *J.R.A.S.(C.B.)*, XXXI, No. 82, p. 304.

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

To represent the memorial of him to their eye, they do make small images of silver, brass, and clay, and stone, which they do honour with sacrifices and worship, showing all the signs of outward reverence which possibly they can. In most places where there are hollow rocks and caves, they do set up images in memorial of this God. Unto which they that are devoutly bent, at new and full moons do carry victuals, and worship.

His great festival is in the month of March at their New Year's-tide. The places where he is commemorated are two, not temples, but the one a mountain and the other a tree; either to the one or the other, they at this time go with wives and children, for dignity and merit one being esteemed equal with the other.

The mountain is at the south end of the country, called Samanala Kanda, but by Christian people, Adam's Peak, the highest in the whole island; where, as has been said before, is the print of the Buddha's foot which he left on the top of that mountain in a rock, from whence he ascended to heaven. Unto this footstep they give worship, light up lamps, and offer sacrifices, laying them upon it, as upon an altar. The benefit of the sacrifices that are offered here do belong unto the Moor pilgrims, who come over from the other coast to beg, this having been given them heretofore by a former king. So that at that season there are great numbers of them always waiting there to receive their accustomed fees.

The tree is at the north end of the King's dominions at Anuradhapura. This tree, they say, came flying over from the other coast, and there

THEIR MANNER OF WORSHIP

planted itself, as it now stands, under which the Buddha God at his being on earth used, as they say, often to sit. This is now become a place of worship. The due performance whereof they reckon not to be a little meritorious: insomuch that, as they report, ninety kings have since reigned there successively, where by the ruins that still remain, it appears they spared not for pains and labour to build temples and high monuments to the honour of this God, as if they had been born only to hew rocks, and great stones, and lay them up in heaps. These kings are now happy spirits, having merited it by these their labours.

Under this tree at some convenient distance about ten or twelve feet at the utmost edge of the platform, they usually build booths or tents; some are made slight only with leaves for the present use, but some are built substantial with hewn timber and clay walls, which stand many years. These buildings are divided into small tenements for each particular family. The whole town joins, and each man builds his own apartment: so that the building goes quite round like a circle, only one gap is left, which is to pass through to the *bogaba* tree: and this gap is built over with a kind of portal. The use of these buildings is for the entertainment of the women, who take great delight to come and see these ceremonies, clad in their best and richest apparel. They employ themselves in seeing the dancers, and the jugglers do their tricks: who afterwards by their importunity will get money of them, or a ring off their fingers, or some such matters. Here also they spend their time in eating betel, and in talking with their consorts, and showing their fine clothes. These

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solemnities are always in the night, the booths all set round with lamps; nor are they ended in one night, but last three or four, until the full moon, which always puts a period to them.

These people do firmly believe a resurrection of the body, and the immortality of souls, and a future state. Upon which account they will worship their ancestors. They do believe that those they call gods are the spirits of men that formerly have lived upon the earth. They hold that in the other world, those that are good men though they be poor and mean in this world, yet there they shall become high and eminent; and that wicked men shall be turned into beasts.

They hold that every man's good or bad fortune was predetermined by God, before he was born, according to a usual proverb they have, *Ollua cottaula tiana*, 'It is written in the head'.

They reckon the chief points of goodness to consist in giving to the priests, in making *pujas*, sacrifices to their gods, in forbearing shedding blood of any creature: which to do they call *Pau boi*, a great sin: and in abstaining from eating any flesh at all, because they would not have any hand, or anything to do in killing any living thing. They reckon herbs and plants more innocent food. It is religion also to sweep under the *bogaha* or God-tree, and keep it clean. It is accounted religion to be just and sober and chaste and true, and to be endowed with other virtues, as we do account it.

They give to the poor out of a principle of charity, which they extend to foreigners, as well as to their own countrymen. But of every measure of rice they boil in their houses for their families they will

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take out a handful, as much as they can grip, and put into a bag, and keep it by itself, which they call *mitta-haul*. And this they give and distribute to such poor as they please, or as come to their doors.

Nor are they charitable only to the poor of their own nation, but as I have said to others: and particularly to the Moorish beggars, who are Mohammedans by religion. These have a temple in Kandy. A certain former king gave this temple this privilege, that every freeholder should contribute a *ponnam*¹ to it. And these Moors go to every house in the land to receive it. And if the house be shut they have power to break it open, and to take out of goods to the value of it. They come very confidently when they beg, and they say they come to fulfil the people's charity. And the people do liberally relieve them for charity sake.

CHAPTER XVII

THEIR MANNER OF LIVING

THEIR houses are small, low, thatched cottages, built with sticks, daubed with clay, the walls made very smooth. For they are not permitted to build their houses above one storey high, neither may they cover with tiles, nor whiten their walls with lime, but there is a clay which is as white, and that they use sometimes. They employ no carpenters, or house-builders, unless some few noblemen, but each one builds his own dwelling. In building whereof

¹ a silver coin struck by the King; see Chapter XVIII.

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there is not so much as a nail used; but instead of them everything which might be nailed, is tied with rattans and other strings, which grow in the woods in abundance; whence the builder has his timber for cutting. The country being warm, many of them will not take pains to clay their walls, but make them of boughs and leaves of trees. The poorest sort have not above one room in their houses. They have no chimneys in them, but make their fires in one corner, so that the roof is all blacked with the smoke.

The great people have handsome and commodious houses. They have commonly two buildings one opposite to the other, joined together on each side with a wall, which makes a square courtyard in the middle. Round about against the walls of their houses are banks of clay to sit on; which they often daub over with soft cow-dung, to keep them smooth and clean. Their slaves and servants dwell round about without in other houses with their wives and children.

Their furniture is but small. A few earthen pots which hang up in slings made of canes in the middle of their houses, having no shelves; one or two brass basins to eat in, a stool or two without backs. For none but the King may sit upon a stool with a back. There are also some baskets to put corn in, some mats to spread upon the ground to sleep on: which is the bedding both for themselves and friends when they come to their houses. Also some ebony pestles about four feet long to beat rice out of the husk, and a wooden mortar to beat it in afterwards to make it white, a *hirimony* or grater to grate their coconuts with, a flat stone upon which they grind their pepper and turmeric, etc., with another stone

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which they hold in their hands at the same time. They have also in their houses axes, bills, hoes, adzes, chisels, and other tools for their use. Tables they have none, but sit and eat on the ground.

And now we are mentioning eating, let us take a view of this people at their meals. Their diet and ordinary fare is but very mean, as to our account. If they have but rice and salt in their house, they reckon they want for nothing. For with a few green leaves and the juice of a lemon with pepper and salt, they will make a hearty meal. Beef here may not be eaten; it is abominable: flesh and fish is somewhat scarce. And that little of it they have, they had rather sell to get money to keep, than to eat it themselves: neither is there any but outlandish¹ men, that will buy any of them. It is they indeed do eat the fat and best of the land. Nor is it counted any shame or disgrace, to be a niggard and sparing in diet; but rather a credit even to the greatest of them, that they can fare hard and suffer hunger, which they say, soldiers ought to be able to endure.

The great ones have always five or six sorts of food at one meal, and of them not above one or two at the most of flesh or fish, and of them more pottage than meat, after the Portugal fashion. The rest is only what grows out of the ground. The main substance with which they fill their bellies is rice, the other things are but to give it a relish.

If these people were not discouraged from rearing and nourishing of cattle and poultry, provisions might be far more plentiful. For here are many jackals, which catch their hens; and some tigers, that destroy their cattle: but the greatest of all is

¹ from outlying parts.

THEIR MANNER OF LIVING

the King; whose endeavour is to keep them poor and in want. For from them that have hens his officers take them for the King's use giving little or nothing for them; the like they do by hogs; goats none are suffered to keep, besides the King, except strangers.

In dressing of their victuals they are not to be discommended: for generally they are cleanly and very handy about the same. And after one is used to that kind of fare, as they dress it, it is very savoury and good. They sit upon a mat on the ground, and eat. But he, whom they do honour and respect, sits on a stool and his victuals on another before him.

Their common drink is only water: and if they drink rack, it is before they eat, that it may have the more operation upon their bodies. When they drink they touch not the pot with their mouths, but hold it at a distance, and pour it in. They eat their rice out of china dishes, or brass basins, and they that have not them, on leaves. The curries or other sorts of food which they eat with their rice, is kept in the pans it is dressed in, and their wives serve them with it, when they call for it. For it is their duty to wait and serve their husbands while they eat, and when they have done, then to take and eat that which they have left upon their trenchers. During their eating they neither use nor delight to talk to one another.

They have several sorts of sweetmeats. One they call *caown*. It is like to a fritter and made of rice-flour, and jaggery. They make them up in little lumps, and lay them upon a leaf, and then press them with their thumbs, and put them into

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a frying-pan, and fry them in coconut-oil or butter. When the Dutch came first to Colombo, the King ordered these *caown* to be made and sent to them as a royal treat. And they say, the Dutch did so admire them, that they asked if they grew not upon trees, supposing it past the art of man to make such dainties.

Oggulas, another sort of sweetmeats, made of parched rice, jaggery, pepper, cardamom, and a little cinnamon. They roll them up in balls, which will grow hard. These they tie up in bags and carry them with them when they travel to eat in afternoons when they are hungry.

Alloways, made much after the former manner, only they are flat in the fashion of a lozenge; which are good for faintings and thirsty souls to relish their water, and to eat of in afternoons when they are at home. We carried some of these along with us in our travel.

Yacpetties,¹ made of rice-flour, and the meat of the coconut and jaggery. They are made up into small lumps, and so put in a leaf and laid on a cloth over a pot of boiling water. The steam of which heats that which is laid upon it: and so they are sodden like a pudding. They taste like white bread, almonds and sugar.

Pitu. Which is made thus. They take flour of *coracan*, and sprinkle a little water into it, being both put into a large pot for the purpose. Then they stir and roll it in the pot with their hands: by which means it crumbles into corns like gunpowder. Then

¹ Modder calls these *yakpeti* 'a well known kind of Kandyan sweetmeat. Probably it derived its name from the circumstance of its forming the chief component among the offerings in a devil ceremony'.

THEIR MANNER OF LIVING

they have a pot of boiling water with a cloth over it; and upon this cloth they lay so much of this corn-flour as they can conveniently cover with another pot. And so the steam coming through the cloth boils it, that it will be much like unto a pudding. And this they use to eat as they do rice.

When one comes to another's house, being set down the entertainment is, green leaves, they call *bullat*, which they eat raw with lime and betel-nut, and tobacco. And being set a while, the man of the house will ask the stranger what he comes for, which if he does not suddenly, the stranger will take exception at it, as thinking he is not welcome to him. Neither do they ever go one to visit the other, unless it be for their own ends, either to beg or borrow.

And if kindred, that are very nearly related come together, they have no loving or private conference one with the other, but sit like strangers very solid and grave. And if they stay above one night, which is the common custom, then they do help and assist the man of the house in any work or service he has to do.

When any friends go to another's house to visit, they never go empty-handed, but carry provisions and sweetmeats with them to their friend. And then he makes them a feast according to his ability, but they never eat of those things, which themselves brought. But there is but little feasting among them unless at a wedding.

When they meet one another, their manner of salutation or obeisance is, to hold forth their two hands, the palms upwards, and bow their bodies: but the superior to the inferior hold forth but one

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hand, and if the other be much beneath him, he only nods his head. The women salute by holding up both their hands edgeways to their foreheads. The general compliment one to another at first meeting is to say '*Ay*'; it signifies 'How do you do?': and the other answers, '*Hundoi*', that is, 'Well'.

The habit of the men when they appear abroad is after this sort. The nobles wear doublets of white or blue calico, and about their middle a cloth, a white one next their skin, and a blue one or of some other colour or painted, over the white: a blue or red sash girt about their loins, and a knife with a carved handle wrought or inlaid with silver, sticking in their bosom; and a complete short hanger¹ carved and inlaid with brass and silver by their sides, the scabbard most part covered with silver bravely engraved; a painted cane and sometimes a tuck² in it in their hands, and a boy always bareheaded with long hair hanging down his back waiting upon him, ever holding a small bag in his hand, which is instead of a pocket, wherein is betel-leaves and nuts. Which they constantly keep chewing in their mouths, with lime kept in a silver box rarely engraved, which commonly they hold in their hands, in shape like a silver watch.

The great ones also generally, and spruce young men, do wear their hair long hanging down behind: but when they do any work or travel hard, it annoying them, they tie it up behind. Heretofore generally they bored holes in their ears, and hung weights in them to make them grow long, like the Malabars, but this King not boring his, that fashion is almost

¹ a sword.

² a rapier.

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left off. The men for ornament do wear brass, copper, silver rings on their fingers, and some of the greatest gold. But none may wear any silk.

But the women in their apparel do far surpass the men, neither are they so curious in clothing themselves as in making their wives fine. The men's pride consists in their attendance, having men bearing arms before and behind them.

In their houses the women regard not much what dress they go in, but so put on their clothes as is most convenient for them to do their work. But when they go abroad, and make themselves fine, they wear a short frock with sleeves, to cover their bodies, of fine white calico wrought with blue and red thread in flowers and branches: on their arms silver bracelets, and their fingers and toes full of silver rings, about their necks, necklaces of beads or silver, curiously wrought and engraved, gilded with gold, hanging down so low as their breasts. In their ears hang ornaments made of silver set with stones, neatly engraved and gilded. Their ears they bore when they are young, and roll up coconut-leaves and put into the holes to stretch them out, by which means they grow so wide that they stand like round circles on each side of their faces, which they account a great ornament, but in my judgement a great deformity, they being well-featured women.

Their other ornaments and apparel show very comely on them. Their hair they oil, with coconut-oil to make it smooth, and comb it all behind. Their hair grows not longer than their waists, but because it is a great ornament to have a great bunch of hair, they have a lock of other hair fastened in a plate of engraved silver and gilded, to tie up with their own,

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in a knot hanging down half their backs. About their waists they have one or two silver girdles made with wire and silver plate handsomely engraved, hanging down on each side, one crossing the other behind. And as they walk they chew betel. But notwithstanding all their bravery neither man nor woman wears shoes or stockings, that being a royal dress, and only for the King himself.

It is in general a common custom with all sorts of people, to borrow apparel or jewels to wear when they go abroad, which being so customary is no shame or disgrace to them, neither do they go about to conceal it. For among their friends or strangers where they go, they will be talking saying, 'This I borrowed of such an one, and this of another body'. Their poverty is so great, that their ability will not reach to buy such apparel as they do desire to wear; which nevertheless is but very mean and ordinary at the best.

They have bedsteads laced with canes or rattans, but no testers¹ to them, nor curtains; that the King allows not of; neither have they nor care they for more than one bedstead, which is only for the master of the house to sit or sleep on. To this bedstead belongs two mats and a straw pillow. The women with the children always lie on the ground on mats by the fireside. For a pillow she lays a block or such like thing under her mat, but the children have no pillows at all. And for covering and other bedding they use the cloth they wear by day. But always at their feet they will have a fire burning all night. Which^{not} takes more work for the woman; who must fetch it all upon her head. For it is accounted a

¹ canopy or tent for the bed.

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disgrace for the man to meddle or make with those affairs, that properly do belong unto the woman.

The younger sort of children, such as go naked by day, creep in under a corner of their mother's clothes. And if they feel themselves cold in the night, they rise and blow the fire with their mouths; having no bellows in that country, and so sit and warm themselves thereby.

They are so little given to sleep, that they do rise many times in the night to eat betel and to take tobacco. Which done they lay them down, and sing until they fall asleep again.

Here is no wooing for a wife. The parents commonly make the match, and in their choice regard more the quality and descent than the beauty. If they are agreed, all is done.

In their infancy they have names, whereby one may be called and distinguished from the other. But when they come to years it is an affront and shame to them either men or women, to be called by those names. Which they say is to be like unto dogs. Then they change their names into titles according to the town wherein they were born or do dwell. Also they have other names, which may be compared to coats of arms, properly and only belonging to that family: by which likewise they are called.

This people are very ambitious of their titles, having but little else that they can boast in: and of names and titles of respect they have great plenty in their language.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE MEANS THEY USE FOR A LIVELIHOOD

As for commerce and merchandise with foreign nations, there is little or nothing of that now exercised. Indeed in the time when the Portuguese were on this island, and peace between them and the King, he permitted his people to go and trade with them. The which he would never permit them to do with the Hollanders, though they have much sought for it. They have a small traffic¹ among themselves, occasioned from the nature of the island. For that which one part of the country affords, will not grow in the other. But in one part or other of this land they have enough to sustain themselves I think, without the help of commodities brought from any other country.

But husbandry is the great employment of the country. In this the best men labour. Nor is it held any disgrace for men of the greatest quality to do any work either at home or in the field, if it be for themselves; but to work for hire with them is reckoned for a great shame: and very few are here to be found that will work so: but he that goes under the notion of a gentleman may dispense with all works, except carrying; that he must get a man to

¹ trade.

THE MEANS THEY USE FOR A LIVELIHOOD do when there is occasion. For carrying is accounted the most slavelike work of all.

Their manufactures are few: some calicoes, not so fine as good strong cloth for their own use: all manner of iron tools for smiths, and carpenters, and husbandmen: all sorts of earthenware to boil, stew, fry and fetch water in, goldsmith's work, painter's work, carved work, making steel, and good guns, and the like.

There is no market on the island. Some few shops they have in the cities, which sell cloth, rice, salt, tobacco, limes, drugs, fruits, swords, steel, brass, copper, etc.

As to the prices of commodities, they are sold after this rate. Rice in the city, where it is dearest, is after six quarts for fourpence-halfpenny English, or a small tango or half a tango; six hens as much; a fat pig the same: a fat hog, three shillings and sixpence or four shillings: but there are none so big as ours. A fat goat, two and sixpence. Betelnuts, 4,000 ninepence current price, when a trade.¹

Of money they have but three sorts that pass for coin in the King's dominions. The one was coined by the Portuguese, the King's arms on one side, and the image of a friar on the other, and by the Sinhalese called *tangom massa*. The value of one is ninepence English, *poddi tangom*,² or the small *tangom* is half as much. There is another sort, which all people by the King's permission may and do make. The shape is like a fish-hook, they stamp what mark or impression on it they please. The silver is purely

¹ in trading.

² H. W. Codrington (*Ceylon Coins and Currency*) calls these 'Portuguese double and single tangas, of the saint type, the *tangam massa* and the *poddi* (little) *tangama* worth 9d. and 4½d.'

THE MEANS THEY USE FOR A LIVELIHOOD

fine beyond pieces of eight.¹ For if any suspect the goodness of the plate, it is the custom to burn the money in the fire red hot, and so put it in water: and if it is not then purely white, it is not current money.

The third sort of money is the King's proper coin. For none upon pain of death may coin it. It is called a *ponnam*. It is as small as a spangle:² seventy-five make a piece of eight, or a Spanish dollar. But all sorts of money is here very scarce: and they frequently buy and sell by exchanging commodities.

Pass we now from their business to their pastimes and diversions. They have but few sports, neither do they delight in play. Only at their New Year, they will sport and be merry one with another. Their chief play is to bowl coconuts one against the other, to try which is the hardest. At this time none will work, until their astrologers tell them it is a good hour to handle their tools. And then both men and women do begin their proper work; the man with his axe, bill, and hoe, and the woman with her broom, pestle, and fan to clean her corn.

There is another sport, which generally all people used with much delight, being, as they called it, a sacrifice to one of their Gods; to wit, *Potting Dio*. And the benefit of it is, that it frees the country from grief and diseases. For the beastliness of the exercise they never celebrated it near any town, nor in sight of women, but in a remote place. The manner of the game is thus. They have two crooked sticks like elbows, one hooked into the other, and so with contrivances they pull with ropes, until the one break the other; some siding with one stick,

¹ Spanish dollars.

² any small metal disc.

THE MEANS THEY USE FOR A LIVELIHOOD and some with the other; but never is money laid on either side. Upon the breaking of the stick, that party that has won does not a little rejoice. Which rejoicing is expressed by dancing and singing, and uttering such sordid beastly expressions, together with postures of their bodies, as I omit to write them, as being their shame in acting, and would be mine in rehearsing. For he is at that time most renowned that behaves himself most shamelessly and beastlike.

When they would be merry, and particularly at their great festival in the new moon of June or July, they have people that show pretty tricks and feats of activity before them. A man sets a pole of seven or eight feet long upon his breast; a boy gets to the top of this pole, and leans with his belly upon the end of it; and thus the man dances with the pole on his breast, and the boy on it, and but little holding the pole. A man takes four arrows with blades about a foot long, they are tied one across another, and so laid upon the end of a pole, which rests upon the man's breast. On a sudden he squats down upon the ground, and the four arrows all fall on the four sides of him, sticking in the ground. Two crossbows stand bent one opposite to the other, charged with arrows drawn up to the heads: they are placed just so high, as they may fly over a man's back when he lies flat upon the ground. A man dances between them and shows tricks, and when he is pleased, he touches a string made fast to both their triggers, at which they both instantly discharge, and he falls flat down between them, and the arrows fly over his back, which if they hit him, undoubtedly fly through his body. A woman takes two naked swords, under each

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arm one, and another she holds in her mouth, then fetches a run and turns clear over, and never touches the ground till she lights on her feet again, holding all her swords fast. There are divers other diversions of this nature too large to mention.

At their leisure when their affairs will permit, they commonly meet at places built for strangers and wayfaring men to lodge in, in their language called *amblomb*, where they sit chewing betel, and looking one upon the other very gravely and solidly, discoursing concerning the affairs at court, between the King and the great men; and what employment the people of the city are busied about. For as it is the chief of their business to serve the King, so the chief of their discourse is concerning such matters. Also they talk of their own affairs, about cattle and husbandry. And when they meet with outlandish men they inquire about the laws and government of their country, and if it be like theirs; and what taxes and duties we are bound to pay, and perform to our King, etc.

And this manner of passing their leisure time they account the greatest recreation. Drunkenness they do greatly abhor, neither are there many that do give themselves to it. Tobacco likewise they account a vice, but yet is used both by men and women; but more eaten than smoked in pipes.

But above all things betel-leaves they are most fond of, and greatly delighted in: when they are going to bed, they first fill their mouths with it, and keep it there until they wake, and then rise and spit it out, and take in more. So that their mouths are no longer clear of it, than they are eating their victuals. This is the general practice

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both of men and women, insomuch that they had rather want victuals or clothes than be without it; and my long practice in eating it brought me to the same condition. And the reasons why they thus eat it are, first, because it is wholesome. Secondly, to keep their mouths perfumed: for being chewed it casts a brave scent. And thirdly, to make their teeth black. For they abhor white teeth, saying, that is like a dog.

The better sort of women, as gentlewomen or ladies, have no other pastime but to sit and chew betel, swallowing the spittle, and spitting out the rest. And when friends come to see and visit one the other, they have as good society thus to sit and chew betel, as we have to drink wine together.

CHAPTER XIX

THEIR LAWS, LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

HERE are no laws, but the will of the King, and whatsoever proceeds out of his mouth is an immutable law. Nevertheless they have certain ancient usages and customs that do prevail and are observed as laws; and pleading them in their courts and before their Governors will go a great way.

To hint some of them: their lands are hereditary, and do descend from parents to their children. But the eldest son by privilege of birthright does not possess and enjoy all the land, but if the father please he can divide it among his children. Yet

THEIR LAWS, LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

in case the eldest son does enjoy the land, then without dispute he is to maintain his mother and her children until they come to years of ability to provide for themselves.

They have a custom in the land of Uva, which is a great breeder of cattle, and has but very little wood, so that they have not wherewith to make hedges; it is that when they sow their lands they drive their cattle thence, and watch them all day that they break not into the corn; and at night they tie their cattle to secure them from straying into the corn lands: otherwise if one neighbour's cattle eats another neighbour's corn, he must pay damage.

Those that are lazy and loth to plough, or that are poor and want corn to sow, the custom is, to let out their ground to others to till at *ande*, that is at halves; but fees and accustomable dues taken out by the husbandman that tills it, the owner of the land receives not much above a third part.

For the husbandman has divers considerable payments besides his half share of the corn. As namely, first he has *cotoumaun*, that is, so much corn as they scratch off from the whole heap of trodden corn by drawing a bundle of thorns over it. Secondly, *waracool*, that is a consideration for the expenses they are at in tilling and sowing: for which there is a rate according to the bigness of the field. Thirdly, *warrapoll*, that is the corn they leave at the bottom of the heap after they have done fanning. Which is the women's fee for their pains in weeding the corn, and in pulling it up where it is too thick, and planting it where it is thin, etc. Fourthly, *bolerud*, which is the chaff and sweepings of the pit. This sometimes comes to a considerable value

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according to the quantity of corn that is trodden. Fifthly, *peldorah*, which is a piece of corn they leave standing before that watch house, which is set up in their corn grounds to watch their corn from the wild beasts. And this left standing is the fee for watching. There is yet another due *ockyaul*¹ which belongs to their gods, and is an offering sometimes carried away by the priest; and sometimes they bestow it upon the beggars, and sometimes they will take it and hang it in their houses, and at convenient time sacrifice it themselves. It is one of their measures which is about half a peck.

And in the meantime until this corn is ripe, the owner is fain to go a-borrowing corn to sustain himself and family. Which he pays consideration for: which is, when his own corn is ripe, a bushel and a half for a bushel, that is at the rate of fifty per cent. Which manner of lending corn is a means that does maintain many strangers and others. For they who have got a small stock of corn by that profit may competently live upon it. Which was the means that Almighty God prepared for my relief and maintenance.

Corn thus lent is somewhat difficult to receive again. For the debtor being poor, all the creditors will come into the field, when the corn is a-sharing, that being the place of payment: and as soon as it is divided each one will scramble to get what he can. And having taken possession of it, from thence the creditor must carry it home himself, be it far or near.

If the debt remains in the debtor's hands two

¹ Ferguson puts these down as *kaṭumānā*, *varakola(?)*, *varapola*, *bolroḍu*, *pāldora*, *akyāla*.

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years, it becomes doubled: and from thence forward be it never so long, no more use¹ is to be paid by the law of the land, which act was established by the King in favour of the poor, there having been some whole families made slaves for a bushel of corn.

But yet it is lawful for the creditor, missing corn, to lay hands on any of his goods: or if the sum be somewhat considerable, on his cattle or his children, first taking out a licence from the magistrate to do so, or if he have none, on himself or his wife, if she came with him to fetch the debt, if not, she is clear from this violence; but his children are not.

It is lawful and customary for a man in necessity to sell or pawn his children, or himself. No man building a house either in his own or another man's ground, if he be afterwards minded to leave his land, where his house stood, may pull it down again: but must let it stand for the benefit of whosoever comes after him.

. For the deciding of matters in controversy especially of more abstruse cognizance, the parties do both swear before their gods, sometimes in their temples, and sometimes upon more extraordinary occasions in hot oil.

Sometimes they do decide their debates by swearing in hot oil. Which because it is remarkable I will relate at large. They are permitted thus to swear in matters of great importance only, as when lawsuits happen about their lands, or when there is no witness. When they are to swear, each party has a licence from the Governor for it, written with his hand to it. Then they go and wash their heads and bodies, which is a religious ceremony. And that

¹ interest.

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night they are both confined prisoners in a house with a guard upon them, and a cloth tied over each of their right hands and sealed, lest they might use any charm to harden their fingers.

The next morning they are brought out; they then put on clean clothes, and purify themselves, reckoning they come into the presence of God. Then they tie to their wrists the leaf wherein the Governor's licence is, and repair under some *bogaha*, God-tree, and all the officers of the county assemble with a vast number of people besides. Coconuts are brought, and oil is there extracted from them in the sight of the people, that all may see there is no deceit. Also they have a pan of cow-dung and water boiling close by : the oil and cow-dung being both boiling and thoroughly hot, they take a young leaf of a coconut tree and dip that into the oil, that all may see it is hot. For it sings, and frizzles up, and roars as if you poured water into hot boiling oil. And so they do likewise to the cow-dung. When all are satisfied the oil is hot, the two men come and stand on each side of this boiling oil, and say, 'The God of Heaven and Earth is witness, that I did not do this that I am accused of'; or, 'The four sorts of gods be witness, that this land in controversy is mine'. And then the other swears quite contrary. But first the accuser always swears. The accused also relates his own innocence, or his own right and title. The cloths that their hands were bound up in are taken off. And immediately upon using the former words, he dips his two fingers into the hot oil, flinging it out three times. And then goes to the boiling cow-dung and does the same. And so does the other. Then

they tie up their hands again with the cloth, and keep both of them prisoner till the next day. When their hands are looked upon, and their fingers' ends rubbed with a cloth, to see if the skin comes off. And from whose fingers the skin comes, he is forsworn. The penalty of which is a great forfeiture to the King and great satisfaction to the adversary.

I am able to testify, that the fingers of some of these that have thus sworn have been whole from any scald after this use of hot oil: but whether it be their innocence or their art, that it thus comes to pass, I know not. The penalty of the breach of the laws or customs of this land is at the pleasure of the judge, either amercement, or imprisonment, or both.

To speak now a little of their language. It is a language peculiar to that island: and I know not any Indian nations that speak it but themselves. There are a few words that are common to the Sinhalese and the Malabars, which they might borrow from one another, by intercourse and commerce, but the words are so few, that a Malabar cannot understand a Sinhalese, nor the contrary.

Their language is copious, smooth, elegant, courtly; according as the people that speak it are. Who are full of words, titles and compliments. They have no less than twelve or more titles that they use when they speak to women according to their ranks and qualities.

So that it is hard to speak to a woman unless they know what she is before, lest they might mistake her title. And the women are much pleased with some of the better titles.

The men also have various titles, though not so

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many as the women. People give to them these titles according to the business they have with them. If they come for some favour or kindness to be done them, they bestow the better sort of titles upon them.

They have seven or eight words for Thou, or You, which they apply to persons according to their quality, or according as they would honour them.

Their ordinary ploughmen and husbandmen do speak elegantly, and are full of compliment. And there is no difference between the ability and speech of a countryman and a courtier. When any has a favour to beg of a nobleman, or any business with him, they do not abruptly speak their desires or errand at first, but bring it in with a long harangue of his worth or good disposition or abilities; and this in very handsome and taking style. They bring up their children to speak after this manner, and use them to go with errands to great men; and they are able to tell their tale very well also.

In their speech the people are bold without sheepish shamefacedness, and yet no more confidence than is becoming.

They have certain words of form and civility, that they use upon occasion. When they come to another man's house, he asks them what they come for, which is his civility, and they answer '*Nicamava*, I come for nothing', which is their ordinary reply, though they do come for something. And upon this they have a fable.

A god came down upon earth one day, and bade all his creatures come before him and demand what they would have and it should be granted them. So all the beasts and other creatures came, and one

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desired strength, and another legs, and another wings, etc. And it was bestowed on them. Then came the white men, the god asked them, what they came for? And they said, they desired beauty and valour and riches. It was granted them. At last came the Sinhalese, the god inquired of them, what they came for. They answered, '*Nicamava*, I come for nothing'. Then replied he again, 'Do you come for nothing, then go away with nothing'. And so they for their compliment fared worse than all the rest.

When one proffers something as a gift to another, although it be a thing that he is willing to have, and would be glad to receive, yet he will say, '*Eepa queinda*,¹ No, I thank you; how can I be so chargeable to you?' And in the same time while the words are in his mouth, he reaches forth his hand to receive it.

I shall conclude this discourse of their language, by giving you a taste of their proverbs, some hints of the strain of their speech.

'*Miris dilah, ingurah gotta.*' I have given pepper, and got ginger. Spoken when a man makes a bad exchange. And they use it in reference to the Dutch succeeding the Portuguese in their island.

'*Datta horrala badda perind.*' Pick your teeth to fill your belly. Spoken of stingy niggardly people.

'*Caula yonawa ruah atti.*' To eat before you go forth is handsome and convenient. Which they therefore ever do.

'*Kiallah tiannah, degery illand avah oppala*

¹ Ferguson makes this *E eppa queinda* and gives as the Sinhalese equivalent '*Āyi epā koyiñda*' ['Why? Not required. Where (got you it)?'].
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hanguand mordy.' As the saying is, if I come to beg buttermilk, why should I hide my pan. Which is ordinarily spoken to introduce the business that one man comes to speak to the other about.

'Hingonna wellendam cor cottonwat geah par wardenda netta.' A beggar and a trader cannot be lost. Because they are never out of their way.

'Atting mitting delah hottarah barracurnowah.' To lend to another makes him become an enemy. For he will hate you if you ask him for it again.

'Annuna min yain ecka ourowaying younda eppa.' Go not with a slave in one boat. It signifies, to have no dealing or correspondence with anyone's slave. For if any damage should happen, it would fall upon your head, and by their law you must make it good.

'Issara otting bollanowa pos cotting.' First look in the hand, afterwards open the mouth. Spoken of a judge who first must have a bribe before he will pronounce on their side.

'Take a ploughman from the plough, and wash off his dirt, and he is fit to rule a kingdom.' Spoken of the people of Kandy, where there are such eminent persons of the *Hondrew* rank; because of the civility, understanding, and gravity of the poorest men among them.

'Nobody can reproach the King and the beggar.' Because the former is above the slander of the people, and nothing can be said bad enough of the latter.

'Like noya and polonga.' Denoting irreconcilable enemies.

¹ See D. W. Ferguson: 'Knox's Sinhalese Vocabulary' in *J.R.A.S.(C.B.)*, XIV, No. 47, for his renderings of these Sinhalese proverbs.

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‘He that has money to give to his judge, needs not fear, be his cause right or wrong.’ Because of the corruption of the great men, and their greediness of bribes.

‘If our *gerehab*¹ be bad, what can God do against it?’ Reckoning that none of their gods have power to reverse the fate of an ill planet.

‘The ague is nothing, but the headache is all.’ That country is very subject to agues, which do especially afflict their heads who have them.

Their learning is but small. All they ordinarily learn is to read and to write. But it is no shame to a man if he can do neither. Nor have they any schools wherein they might be taught and instructed in these or any other arts.

Their books are only of their religion and of physic. Their chief arts are astronomy and magic. They have a language something differing from the vulgar tongue (like Latin to us) which their books are written in. They learn to write upon sand, spreading it upon the ground, and making it smooth with the hand, and so write the letters with their fingers to bring their hand in use.

They write not on paper, for of that they have little or none; but on a tallipot leaf with an iron bodkin, which makes an impression. This leaf thus written on, is not folded, but rolled up like ribbon, and somewhat resembles parchment.

The *Gonnis*, who are men of leisure, write many books of *bonna*, that is of the ceremonies of their religion: and will sometimes carry them to great men, as a present, and do expect a reward.

The King when he sends any warrants or orders

¹ Sinhalese *grha*.

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to his officers, has his writings wrapped up in a way proper to himself, and none else do or may fold up their leaves in that manner but he.

They write upon the tallipot leaves records or matters of great moment, or that are to be kept and preserved: but for any ordinary business as letters, etc., they commonly use another leaf, called *taulcole*.

But to speak a little of their astronomy. They who have understanding in it, and practise it, are the priests of the highest order, of which the present King's father was. But the common sort of astronomers are the weavers. These men can certainly foretell eclipses of the sun and moon. They make *leet*, that is almanacks, that last for a month.

These astronomers tell them also when the old year ends to the very minute. At which time they cease from all work, except the King's, which must not be omitted. They acquaint them also with the good hour of the New Year, when they are to begin to work. At which time every man and woman begins to do somewhat in their employment they intend to follow the ensuing year. They have also another season directed them by their astronomers: that is, when to begin to wash their heads, which is assigned to everyone according to the time of his nativity, which ceremony they observe very religiously.

These astronomers, or rather astrologers, are skilful in the knowledge of the stars, and planets, of which they reckon nine: 'tis supposed they may add the Dragon's Head and Tail.¹ By which they pretend to foretell all things concerning the health

¹ the ascending or descending node of the moon.

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and recovery of sick persons; also concerning the fate of children born, about which the parents do presently consult them, and save their children or kill them according to the fortunate or unfortunate hour they tell the parents they were born in.

When a person is sick, he carries to these men his nativity, which they call *hanna hom pot*,¹ upon the perusal of which they tell his destiny. These also direct fit times for beginning journeys, or other undertakings. They are likewise consulted concerning marriages by looking upon the man and woman's nativity.

They reckon their time from one *Saccawarsi*² an ancient king. Their year consists of 365 days. They begin their year upon our eight-and-twentieth day of March, and sometimes the seven-and-twentieth, and sometimes, but very seldom, on the nine-and-twentieth. The reason of which I conceive to be; to keep it equal to the course of the sun, as our leap year does.

They have no clocks, hour-glasses, or sundials, but keep their time by guess. The King indeed has a kind of instrument to measure time. It is a copper dish holding about a pint, with a very small hole in the bottom. This dish they set a-swimming in an earthen pot of water, the water leaking in at the bottom till the dish be full, it sinks. And then they take it out, and set it in empty on the water again, and that makes one *pay*.³ Few or none use this but the King, who keeps a man on purpose to watch it continually. The people will use it upon some

¹ Sinhalese *hañdahan-pat* = horoscope.

² Sinhalese *śaka-varsa* = Saka era. Still used for astrological calculations.

³ Sinhalese *pä* = hour.

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occasions, as if they are to sow their corn at any particular hour, as being the good lucky season, then they make use of the copper pan, to know the time exactly.

CHAPTER XX

OF THEIR DEATH AND BURIAL

THEY live to a great age, very often to fourscore, and hale at that age: the King's sister was near a hundred. They are healthy and of a sound constitution. The diseases this land is most subject to, are agues and fevers, and sometimes bloody fluxes.¹ The smallpox also sometimes happens among them. From which they cannot free themselves by all their charms and enchantments, which are oftentimes successful to them in other distempers. Therefore they do confess, like the magicians in Egypt, that this is the very finger of Almighty God. They are also subject to aches and pains in their bodies. For the remedy whereof they have excellent ointments and oils, which they make and keep to have ready when they have occasion.

Here are no professed physicians or surgeons, but all in general have some skill that way, and are physicians and surgeons to themselves. Their medicines they make of the leaves that are in the woods, and the bark of trees.

They are oftentimes stung with venomous serpents, upon which sudden death follows without speedy help: but if the bite be taken in time, they can certainly cure themselves, and make nothing

¹ dysenteries.

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of it. Which they perform both by herbs and charms. Though upon the sting they presently¹ vomit blood. The knowledge of these antidotal herbs they have learned from the mongoose, a kind of ferret. This creature when the *noya* and he meets always fight. If he chances to be bitten by the serpent, which is very venomous, he runs away to a certain herb and eats it and so is cured, and then comes back and fights again. The Sinhalese when they see these two creatures fighting, do diligently observe them, and when they see the mongoose goes away, they take notice of the herbs he eats, and thereby have learned what herbs are proper to cure such venoms.

They are skilful also in the use of charms, to cure the stings of serpents or to prevent them; the *noyas* they can charm to that pass, that they will take them up in their hands, and carry them in baskets and handle them and kiss them without any harm. But the *polonga* will not hear a charm. They charm other wild and venomous creatures also; as the tiger that he shall not hurt their cattle.

But to cure inward diseases they are not excellent. But generally when they are sick they apply themselves to their gods. But their chief supplication they make to the devil, as being God's instrument, sent to punish and afflict whom he pleases.

These people are very loth to die, and as much afraid of the devil in their sickness, whom at such times they chiefly invoke. Being dead none will come near the house for many days, lest they should be defiled. The better sort burn the dead, because worms and maggots should not eat them. But the poorer sort, who regard not such matters, bury them

¹ shortly after.

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making a hole in the woods, and carrying the body wrapped up in a mat upon a pole on their shoulders with two or three attending it, and so laying it in without any ceremony, and covering it.

Some days after his decease, if his friends wish well to his soul, they send for a priest to the house, who spends a whole night in praying and singing for the saving of that soul.

Their manner of mourning for the dead is, that all the women that are present do loose their hair, and let it hang down, and with their two hands together behind their heads do make a hideous noise, crying and roaring as loud as they can, much praising and extolling the virtues of the deceased, though there were none in him: and lamenting their own woeful condition to live without him. Thus for three or four mornings they do rise early, and lament in this manner, also on evenings. Meanwhile the men stand still and sigh.

But persons of greater quality are burned, and that with ceremony. Their order for burning is thus. If the body be not thus put into a trough or hollowed tree, it is laid upon one of his bedsteads, which is a great honour among them. This bedstead with the body on it, or hollowed tree with the body in it, is fastened with poles, and carried upon men's shoulders unto the place of burning: which is some eminent place in the fields or highways, or where else they please. There they lay it upon a pile of wood some two or three feet high. Then they pile up more wood upon the corpse, lying thus on the bedstead, or in the trough. Over all they have a kind of canopy built, if he be a person of very high quality, covered at top, hung about with painted cloth, and

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bunches of coconuts, and green boughs; and so fire is put to it. After all is burnt to ashes, they sweep together the ashes into the manner of a sugar-loaf: and hedge the place round from wild beasts breaking in, and they will sow herbs there. Thus I saw the King's uncle, the chief *Tirinanx*, who was as it were the Primate of all the nation, burned, upon a high place, that the blaze might be seen a great way. If they be noblemen, but not of so high quality, there is only a bower erected over them, adorned with plantain trees, and green boughs, and bunches as before.

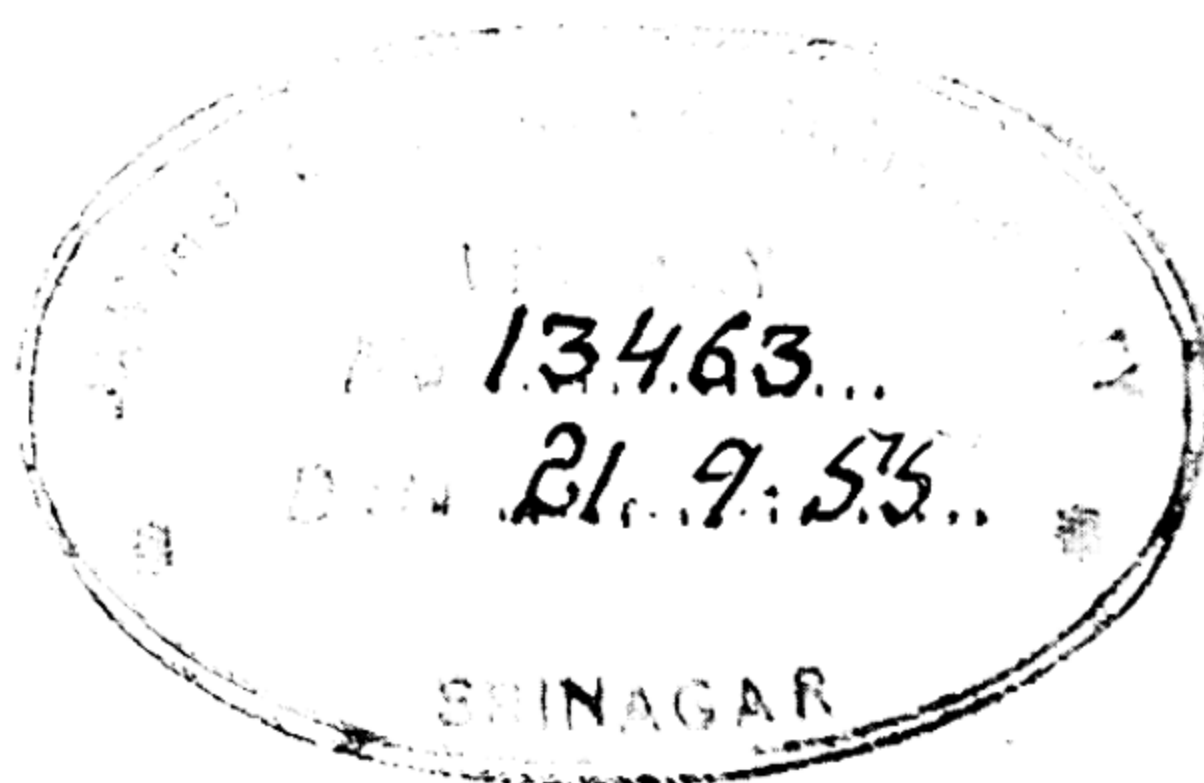
But if any die of the smallpox, be his degree what it will, he must be buried upon thorns, without any further ceremony.



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